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Senate panel wants to extend LOC to Rota and Tinian EDA projects. PAGE 2

FEMA chief tours Hopwood ruins; vows help for speedy reconstruction. PAGE 3

Wanted man's accomplices named

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Consalacion Sablan is escorted from Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho's courtroom following another bail hearing, this time in relation to a burglary and theft case where over $126,000 was stolen.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Although Edward Castro remains at large, his alleged accomplices in a burglary and theft case for which he is wanted have been identified—a couple who had been arrested in their home after drugs and stolen items were found inside.

Brandon Joel Lizama Benavente and Consalacion Villagomez Muña Sablan were again brought before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph

See WANTED on Page 4

Chief parole officer accused of theft by deception

Kingman

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General has filed charges against chief parole officer Nick Masga Reyes, accusing him of theft by deception and misconduct in public office, among other charges.

Assistant attorney general James Kingman filed two cases against Reyes last Wednesday in relation to a project to build a patio at the CNMI Parole Office.

In one of the cases, Reyes is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit

See CHIEF on Page 4

'Web-based digital economy will generate add'l revenue for NMI'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) believes the CNMI will reap significant benefit from attracting internet-based businesses and remote workers to become residents.

DeLeon Guerrero

DeLeon Guerrero underscored the need for the CNMI to encourage the public and private sectors to engage in internet-based digital economy with her introduction of a resolution to encourage the public and private sectors

See DIGITAL on Page 4

SNILD passes local bill that re-appropriates $300K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation passed on Wednesday a local bill that will re-appropriate $300,000 to pay for outstanding medical referral obligations, for road anti-skid resurfacing, and for a ponding basin.

Seventeen SNILD members voted "yes" and only Rep. Roy Christopher A. Ada (R-Saipan) voted "no" to a motion to pass House Local Bill 23-36, Draft 1.

Camacho

During the discussions on the bill, Ada said the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. had opposed this legislation because it takes away money that was initially allocated to help families seeking affordable housing solutions.

"For that reason, I will not be supporting this," he said.

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The most romantic day of the year is here and Hyatt Regency Saipan has prepared something special for you and your love.
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BUSINESS
Not even a year open and Kanto Diyes has already expanded its restaurant two-fold with the acquisition of the lease of Jacob's Barbecue and Bakeshop next door.
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Local

Senate panel wants to extend LOC to Rota and Tinian EDA projects

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee wants to extend the $15-million line of credit with the Marianas Public Land Trust to Rota and Tinian for existing or future U.S. Economic Development Administration's Capital Improvement Projects and 702 CIP annual projects within the seven-year term of the LOC.

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee has completed its report regarding House Bill 23-95, House Substitute 1, that repeals and re-enacts a newly enacted public law that authorizes the Commonwealth government to negotiate a revolving LOC with the MPLT.

After holding public hearings on House Bill 23-95, HS1, the committee, chaired by Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), recommends the full Senate pass the legislation with amendments in the form of Senate Substitute 1. One of the committee report's recommendations is to insert additional language on the bill to include extending the LOC to Rota and Tinian.

The committee report will be discussed during the full Senate hearing today, Friday.

Among other amendments that the committee recommends is a technical correction by inserting language to extend the $15-million LOC agreement with the respective municipalities of Rota and Tinian and the autonomous agencies of the CNMI.

The committee inserted amendments in regards to the advance payments of projects approved under the U.S. EDA, to include existing or future EDA projects for Rota and Tinian during the seven-year term of the LOC.

The committee approved the statutory provision recommended by the MPLT to reflect the House's intent to grant MPLT the authority to withhold its annual interest income distribution to the Commonwealth government each fiscal year as security payment for the $15-million LOC until such time that the credit is paid in full.

The committee approved the statutory provision recommended by MPLT to authorize autonomous agencies to enter into the LOC agreement.

Additional language was inserted to clarify payment to the LOC from reimbursement received by the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs for 702 CIP project advances funded by the LOC.

In line with the negotiations among the CNMI government, EDA, and the MPLT, the enactment of the committee's proposed version of the bill, House Bill 23-95, House Substitute 1, Senate Substitute 1, would not result in additional expenses in regards to the approved EDA projects, the committee said.

The committee said its version of the bill provides that should advance payments be required for future projects for Rota and Tinian or 702 CIP projects, the compounded daily interest rate of 5.5% reflected in the terms of the LOC be applied to such projects before the drawdown of any funds from the MPLT line of credit.

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FEMA chief tours Hopwood ruins; vows help for speedy reconstruction

Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Deanne Criswell was on Saipan last Monday and saw in person the state of disrepair and damage caused by Super Typhoon Yutu to Hopwood Middle School, the largest middle school in the CNMI.

The visit of the FEMA administrator comes as the U.S. Department of Education approved last Friday the request of the Public School System, through the Federal Programs Office, to reprogram a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act grant money for the procurement of modular and portable prefabricated classrooms for Hopwood Middle School.

Accompanied by a team of FEMA delegation, Criswell flew in from the nation's capital and met with acting Education commissioner Donna M. Flores, who, along with Hopwood Middle School principal Victorino Borja, among others, toured the condemned school buildings.

It has been six years since the extremely powerful typhoon devastated Saipan and caused severe damage to the school's infrastructure. Six of the nine buildings were totally destroyed. These school buildings have been cordoned off to the public since 2018.

During her walkabout with Flores in the ruins of the sprawling campus, Criswell vowed to help expedite the reconstruction and repair of the school campus.

Flores took the visit as an opportunity to plead for Hopwood's case.

"There are a lot of memories here. Most of the graduates here, being one of the oldest schools in the CNMI, are now parents and stakeholders of our community, and their children are also attending school here," Flores told FEMA Criswell. "Now that you are here, we hope that we will finally see the realization of a new Hopwood Middle School campus. It gives us reassurance."

Criswell acknowledged Flores' plea. "You had me pushing now [for the expeditious reconstruction]," Criswell told Flores. "This is really, really a beautiful property [that needs immediate support]."

Saipan was part of Criswell's regional visit to all FEMA-funded projects. She flew in from the nation's capital to Saipan on Monday. She and her FEMA team flew to Guam yesterday for a separate inspection-visit before flying to Maui, Hawaii for a post-wildfire inspection.

Criswell is the highest-ranking Biden administration official to visit Saipan in recent years. She was appointed by Biden in 2021.

During their tour, Flores told Criswell of the keen interest of the U.S. Department of Education in the school's reconstruction, mentioning the September 2023 visit of the department's senior risk consultant, Christine Jackson, who flew in to inspect the campus and "pledged to bring to the attention" of Secretary Miguel Cardona the progress of the rebuilding work.

Criswell held a private pull aside talk with Flores before wrapping her walkabout at Hopwood Middle School.

PSS

Acting Education commissioner Donna M. Flores, center, explains to Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Deanne Criswell, left, and her team how the 2018 Super Typhoon Yutu damaged six of the nine schools buildings of the largest middle school in the Northern Marianas.

USDOE approval

The U.S. Department of Education approved last Friday PSS' use of its ARPA share to fund 20 modular classrooms that will ease and decongest the crowding of Hopwood Middle School. Flores shared this good news with Criswell last Monday.

In 2020, FEMA announced that it had awarded $25.112 million for the repairs and replacement of buildings for Hopwood Middle School due to the damage sustained from Super Typhoon Yutu.

Of the $25.112 million for PSS, a portion was set aside for modular classrooms. However, unforeseen factors delayed the procurement of the prefabricated modular classrooms.

In 2020, PSS acted quickly and sought the use of its ARPA money for the modular classrooms. Then-PSS Federal Programs officer Tim Thornburgh made the initial effort to seek the USDOE's approval.

Hopwood Middle School at that time was temporarily relocated to the FEMA-built temporary classrooms at the Koblerville Elementary School soccer field. It transitioned back to its old campus in the same year after 19 classrooms were renovated. The Koblerville temporary tent classrooms were closed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, Thornburgh's successor, Jacqueline Che, pressed on and followed up on the request for a waiver for the use of the ARPA money for modular classrooms.

"Thank you for your request to procure modular, portable prefabricated classroom for Hopwood Middle School. The request is approved," said Iztali Ortiz, the U.S. Department of Education's Program Officer for the ARP-Outlying Areas in an email notification to Che.

"Now that the PSS-ARP grant will be funding the modulars, the full amount [of $25.1 million] will go toward the repairs and building construction," Che explained.

Flores said PSS is now working with various local and federal agencies, including the Office of the Governor's Public Assistance Office and FEMA in permitting work as they schedule the demolition of all six condemned buildings in Hopwood, to pave the way for the construction of modular classrooms.

The demolition work is scheduled this month. ***(PSS)***

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Man arrested for shooting couple found guilty

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A man who was arrested last year for shooting a couple with a pellet rifle was found guilty following a bench trial last week.

Sergio Mangarero Rangamar was found guilty by Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio of assault and battery, assault, and two counts of disturbing the peace during a bench trial last Feb. 2.

According to Kim-Tenorio's order, after having considered the testimony of witnesses and after hearing the arguments of counsels, evidence presented proved guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The judge ordered the Office of Adult Probation to prepare a pre-sentence investigation report and submit it to the court by May 31.

Rangamar will be sentenced on June 11, at 1:30pm.

According to court documents, Rangamar was arrested on July 19, 2023 for shooting a couple with a pellet rifle and hitting one of them in the leg.

The couple was walking home after buying groceries in Chalan Laulau when the defendant started yelling at them.

The woman identified the man as Rangamar, who, she said, is related to her children's father.

She said Rangamar got down from a heavy equipment and went inside his tin house, which was nearby. When he came out, he ran toward them while holding a gun, she added.

She said two or three shots were fired at her, adding that her right ankle was hit.

The woman's companion said he tried to shield her when Rangamar shot them five times.

He said the woman told him that she was shot, and he saw blood on her right ankle. As they left the area, he said he saw Rangamar walking back to a yellow excavator.

Police later found an empty Crossman .22 caliber pellet container outside Rangamar's residence.

WANTED

From page 1

Camacho yesterday, this time in connection with a burglary and theft case in which they allegedly served as Castro's accomplices.

Castro allegedly burglarized a Capital Hill home of about $126,000 worth of items.

Benavente and Sablan were previously brought before Camacho in relation to a drug case where they were allegedly found in possession of drugs, a firearm, and ammunition when police executed a search warrant at their home in Papago.

In the burglary and theft case, the court imposed a $50,000 cash bail on each defendant before remanding them back to Department of Corrections custody.

The court ordered the pair to return to court on Feb. 16, for a preliminary hearing specifically for this case while their arraignment is set for March 4.

According to court documents, the Department of Public Safety received a call on Jan. 19, reporting a burglary in progress at a two-story house on Capital Hill.

The victim, Yuan Jing, told police over the phone that she was hiding in her bedroom's restroom with her 7-year-old son because she could hear two or three individuals moving around her house.

Police arrived at the scene at around 6:34am and saw that the home's automatic car garage door had been pried open with a jack stand, two pieces of wood, a screwdriver, and a bolt cutter.

After securing the scene, police met with the victim who stated that she kept $110,000 worth of savings in her home and it had been stolen, along with her branded bag and wallet containing $1,000.

In addition, the victim said her business checks, bank cards, luggage, a brand-new iPhone 15 Pro Max, Apple AirPods, a Dell computer monitor, an HP computer monitor, an electric notebook, and jewelry had also been stolen.

That same day, the victim said she went to Bank of Saipan to cancel her checks and inform them they had been stolen, to which they told her that a woman had come in earlier to cash a check.

The cashed check was shown to Jing, which she submitted to police. The check was addressed to Sablan dated Jan. 10, in the amount of $1,500.

At around 6:23pm that same day, police learned that a couple tried to use a credit card at the Rock Steady shop and the identification card provided with the credit card had the picture scratched out.

Police got surveillance footage from the shop and identified Sablan as the same woman who had cashed Jing's work check.

On Jan. 20, the victim received a call from a man who was asking her for money in exchange for her stolen phone. The man said another man sold him the phone but it was locked and it was directing him to call her number.

At around 10:57am that same day, a man named Jack Sablan allegedly called her stating he bought her phone and her iPad and was willing to return them for a reward.

Jing, along with police, agreed to meet with the caller at Winner's Laundry where police managed to identify Castro, who was posing as Jack Sablan.

Castro was escorted back to DPS' headquarters where he was interviewed. He told police that he had tried to sell the items back to the victim under the instruction of Sablan, saying he only did it because he owes Sablan money.

Before the suspects were detained, it was learned that they managed to use Jing's credit cards in several other stores and shops.

Sablan and Benavente were arrested on Feb. 1, when police executed a search warrant in relation to the theft and burglary case that Jing had reported. During the search, police also busted the couple for possession of methamphetamine, a firearm, and ammunition.

CHIEF

From page 1

misconduct in public office, one count of conspiracy to commit theft by deception, and two counts of theft by deception in relation to the authorization of funds for the patio construction.

In this case, Reyes and a co-defendant, Chuilian Fu, have been served separate penal summons requiring them both to appear before a Superior Court judge on March 4, at 9am to respond to the charges.

Based on the information filed in court, Reyes and Fu agreed on Oct. 4, 2022, to build a patio at the Parole Office that was to be built by a tailoring company owned by Fu, F&S Corp., in the amount of $9,997.80. In reality, though, the patio was allegedly built using unpaid labor performed by parolees under the direction of Reyes.

"…One or both defendants committed at least one overt act in pursuance of the conspiracy, to wit procuring the contract, authorizing payment, performing the construction, issuing invoices, and sending communications regarding the conspiracy. …Reyes was a public official, to wit chief parole officer, and committed the above conduct under color of office," said Kingman.

This offense is punishable by imprisonment of not more than 10 years and a fine of not more than $50,000.

Kingman stated in the information that Reyes obtained over $9,000 of CNMI funds by deception by creating or failing to correct the false impression that F&S Corp. would build a patio at the Office of Parole and authorizing the expenditure of $9,987 to F&S Corp.

"[This is]…punishable by… imprisonment for not more than five years," said the information.

As for the other case filed against Reyes, he was charged with four counts of forgery and one count of misconduct in public office.

It is alleged that Reyes forged and altered on or about Dec. 20, 2023, the term of employment of a person from 30 days to one year. This offense is punishable by imprisonment of not more than five years.

DIGITAL

From page 1

to support the acquisition and retention of resident individuals and businesses participating in an internet-based digital economy.

"Besides tourism, this is another business sector of an economy that we can attract into our market to generate additional revenue," DeLeon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The Senate president noted in her Senate Resolution 23-14 that one of the biggest economic changes brought about in the past four years has been a move to an internet-based remote workforce. In the U.S. alone, she said, 13% of the total workforce now works completely online, remotely.

The Senate president said CNMI-based remote workers earn their income from sources outside the CNMI, yet these workers spend that income and pay taxes on that income in the Commonwealth.

DeLeon Guerrero said U.S. citizens and permanent residents who already work remotely can relocate to the CNMI and immediately reap the benefits of the islands' beautiful climate, friendly and family-oriented culture, and extremely favorable tax code.

She said the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver program gives a unique opportunity for citizens of 12 countries—representing a combined population of 350 million people—to travel visa-free to the CNMI for purposes of business or pleasure and to stay for up to 45 days at a time. These countries are Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.

The CNMI has no restrictions on foreign ownership of CNMI-incorporated entities.

DeLeon Guerrero said remote workers from countries under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver program can establish businesses in CNMI and source income inside the Commonwealth while they are visiting and working within the Commonwealth.

She said internet-based businesses are already a listed business type that can take advantage of the Qualifying Certificate program under the Investment Incentive Act of 2000.

The Senate president said U.S.-based technology companies, from startup to corporate giant, can relocate all or part of their business operations to CNMI and see a greatly reduced tax burden while making much-needed investment to the Commonwealth.

'Bill on OAG subpoena powers moves the CNMI closer to authoritarianism'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The bill that aims to give investigative subpoena powers to the Office of the Attorney General moves the CNMI closer to authoritarianism, not away from it, and should be opposed by all who want freedom, according to Public Defender Douglas W. Hartig.

In his letter sent yesterday to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), Hartig said the Office of the Public Defender has several serious concerns about House Bill 23-22, one of which is it cedes too much power to the Attorney General without a compelling government interest. He described the measure as "inappropriate," adding there are lesser restrictive means that remains available.

Hartig adds his comments to that of veteran lawyer Robert T. Torres, whose position opposing the legislation has been concurred by 15 other CNMI lawyers. Torres, instead, suggest creating a law that will establish the "grand jury" process in the CNMI. He said establishing the grand jury process protects the due process of citizens in such investigations.

Authored by Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan), H. B. 23-22 seeks to create an investigative division within the OAG, codify investigative subpoena power, and improve the investigation of cases involving public corruption.

The House of Representatives has already passed the legislation, but it remains pending in the Senate. The bill is with the Senate Judiciary, Government and Law Committee chaired by Babauta.

In his letter of opposition, Hartig said states and the federal government that currently allow subpoenas by agencies do so for very limited and narrowly tailored investigations or for a grand jury. Such is the case with the Office of the Public Auditor, he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

SNILD

From page 1

Ada was referring to NMHC corporate director Jesse S. Palacios' written comments on House Bill 23-36, in which Palacios stated that the money being considered for re-appropriation involves the $300,000 seed money that was initially intended to be allocated to NMHC for its rental and/or home loan programs. Palacios had pointed out that this money is a "unique opportunity" for the CNMI to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing and could potentially make a substantial difference for families aspiring to become first-time homeowners or for existing homeowners in need of critical home repairs to make their homes typhoon-proof.

HLB 23-36, introduced by Rep. Angelo Atalig Camacho (Ind-Saipan), aims to divert the use of money allocated in Saipan Local Law 21-13 to pay for outstanding medical referral obligations and fund road and drainage upgrades in Kagman.

Under House Local Bill 23-36, of the $300,000, $60,000 will be used to pay for outstanding medical referral obligations owed the Saipan Employment Agency & Services Inc. The remaining $240,000 will be used for road anti-skid resurfacing on Chaha Road in Kagman 1 and for a ponding basin in Kagman 3.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) said it was the 21st Legislature that appropriated $300,000 to assist families with home damage from Super Typhoon Yutu. Attao said many on Saipan couldn't qualify for a Small Business Administration loan and couldn't get assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency so the Legislature allocated the money to NMHC so they can address the needs of people that couldn't qualify for these benefits.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

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Skechers is exclusive title sponsor of Saipan Marathon

MVA

Runners take to the course at Saipan Marathon 2019 in the Marianas. The Saipan Marathon 2024 will be held on March 9 in the Marianas under the exclusive title sponsorship of Skechers.

Skechers, the comfort technology company and a global footwear leader, has signed on as exclusive title sponsor of the Saipan Marathon 2024, slated for March 9 in the Marianas.

The Saipan Marathon is a certified measured course by World Athletics in cooperation with the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races.

As of Feb. 7, 316 runners had registered for either the full marathon, half-marathon, 10K, or 5K. The Saipan Marathon is co-organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and Northern Marianas Athletics and is sanctioned under the Northern Marianas Athletics rules and regulations.

"We're honored to have renowned international shoe company Skechers join the Saipan Marathon this year as our exclusive title sponsor, bringing their global reputation of shoe wear with quality, comfort, and style to the race," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Skechers has been a supporter of many sporting events throughout the Marianas over the years, and we're pleased to partner with them on the biggest annual road race on our islands."

Other marathon sponsors are gold sponsors Bridge Capital, IT&E, and Triple J Saipan; Silver Sponsors United Airlines and Matson; Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands; Northern Marianas Athletics; and Bike Pro.

Registration is open at www.raceroster.com and is $110 for the full marathon and $80 for the half marathon, 10K, and 5K. Full marathon participants must be age 18 or older. Half marathon participants must be age 14 or older. With valid photo ID, students ages 18 or younger may register for $60. Registration will close at 5pm ChST on March 7, 2024, and mandatory race packet pickup will be on March 8 from 4pm to 6pm at American Memorial Park Amphitheatre in Garapan, Saipan.

A new course highlighting iconic sites from the Marianas' rich history awaits full marathon runners. The road race will traverse sites from the various eras of Marianas history, including pre-history, the Spanish administration, the Japanese administration in the early 1900s, World War II, and modern history as a U.S. Commonwealth.

Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers and by age division in the marathon. Participants will receive a limited edition official Saipan Marathon T-shirt, official Saipan Marathon medal, certificate of completion, and one entry to the awards banquet, also on March 9.

For more information, visit https://raceroster.com/events/2024/78587/saipan-marathon-2024 or www.mymarianas.com or contact MVA Community Projects coordinator Ed Diaz at (670) 664-3210 or ediaz@mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

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Radewagen welcomes next step for Pacific Partnership Act

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) is an original cosponsor of the bipartisan Pacific Partnership Act, H.R. 7159, and is welcoming passage Tuesday in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Ed Case (D-HI), would bolster U.S. engagement with the Pacific Islands region, an issue which Radewagen highlights often.

Radewagen

Speaking in support of the bill in Committee, Radewagen emphasized that the U.S. is a Pacific Island nation by giving her statement first in Samoan before repeating it in English.

"O lo'u nuu o se tasi o atu motu o le Pasefika, ua telē le ono aafia i faiga mai fafo, ae maise o faiga a le malo o Saina. Ua tele naua atina'e a Saina i totonu o motu o le Pasefika — o atina'e tetele ua fausia i totonu o Samoa Tutoatasi ua tau lata i lo'u nuu.

Ua tatau nei ona faia se gaoioiga! E ao ona tatou faailoa le gauai atu o Amerika i le Pasefika — e faamau ai se faatatau a Amerika mo Motu o le Pasefika ma faamau ai le Fuafuaga e aleaga faatasi ai Au mo le Vasa Pasefika, ina ia vaoia le feteenai i le ala atu o fesoasoani ae faamalosia le galulue faatasi.

E momoli la'u faafetai i lau afioga i le Faipule Case mo lau faatautaiga i lenei mataupu faapea le mamalu o sui na latou lagolago lea faamoemoe mo le Pasefika.

Faafetai ma faamanuia le Atua ia te outou."

"My home is a Pacific Island, and we are increasingly under threat—especially from China. China is increasingly investing in the Pacific Islands—building infrastructure projects just 70 miles from my home, in independent Samoa.

"Now is the time to act! We have to show an American commitment to the Pacific—it codifies an American strategy for the Pacific Islands and codifies the Partners in the Blue Pacific Initiative to deconflict aid to the region and encourage cooperation.

"I want to thank Rep. Case for his leadership on this bill and for all the members who have showed their support for the Pacific Islands.

"Thank you and God bless." ***(PR)***

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

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The KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT
PONY
DOG
"IT'S WHAT YOU CALL IT WHEN POLITICIANS ACT LIKE THEY CARE ABOUT KIDS."

EDITORIAL

No time to govern: A Senate border deal worth taking, but far-right House GOP only cares of politics

After months of protracted negotiations, the Senate has finally unveiled a bipartisan border deal that the GOP had tied to Democrats' other legislative priorities, including needed funding for Ukraine. Speaker Mike Johnson immediately announced its status in the House: dead on arrival.

The MAGA PR machine went into full churn, calling the deal's provisions some kind of soft-on-unauthorized-immigration bleeding-heart-fest, a laughable premise for anyone who bothered to actually skim the bill itself. Among other things, it would formalize the use of a Title 42-like policy when the 7-day average of border encounters—which, contrary to a lot of reporting, include people showing up at legal ports of entry, not just crossing illegally—reached 5,000.

The bill would also surge resources to ICE and the Border Patrol and raise the standard to clear the initial step in an asylum application.

That the GOP is now slamming this deal, chock full as it is of policies that they have professed to want while offering precious little of Democratic priorities puts the lie to the idea that they want legislation at all. They want an exploitable political tool to use in electoral campaigns, including that of Donald Trump.

This also proves rather conclusively that there really is no measure of border restriction and security that the Republicans will be satisfied with, and no lengths Democrats can go to appease them. It's unfortunate that this lesson had to be relearned after Barack Obama spent his first term trying to deport his way to GOP compromise only to be called an open-borders America-hater.

Regardless of the bill's significant shortcomings, at least it was an attempt to do something, anything on immigration after decades of stonewalling and stagnation. Tuesday was the birthday of Ronald Reagan, the last man to sign bipartisan immigration reform.

Mixed with the bad are some positive elements, including efforts to provide counsel for more asylum seekers—who now often go completely unrepresented—give them immediate work authorization and hire more staff for the overwhelmed immigration courts.

The bill also has urgently needed aid for Ukraine and Israel, both invaded and caught in war. These are priorities that the Democrats should now simply indicate that they are planning on moving forward on without the assent of the crazies, joining a handful of moderate Republicans.

As an electoral strategy, the GOP game should backfire. When Republicans are out campaigning on the claim that Democrats

See NO on Page 9

How the D.C. Circuit's forceful rebuke of Trump could put the Jan. 6 trial back on track

By HARRY LITMAN
Los Angeles Times

Harry Litman is the host of the"Talking Feds" podcast.@harrylitman

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals' denial of Donald Trump's immunity claim Tuesday was comprehensive and emphatic—so much so that it could put his election interference trial back on track to proceed ahead of the November election.

The opinion is per curiam, meaning all three judges on the panel joined it and none was singled out as the author. In this case, the form is purposeful: It communicates a unanimity of purpose and a sense of import. As the opinion says, "The question of whether a former President enjoys absolute immunity from federal criminal liability is one of first impression."

It may also be why the ruling took longer than many expected: Every word had to be carefully crafted to the satisfaction of each judge.

The heart of the opinion is its forceful rejection of Trump's appeal on the ground that his outlandish position would violate basic separation-of-powers principles. "At bottom," the court notes memorably, "former President Trump's stance would collapse our system of separated powers by placing the President beyond the reach of all three Branches."

The court also anchors the opinion in individual rights—namely, the right to vote—on the basis that Trump's arguments suggest "that a President has unbounded authority to commit crimes that would neutralize the most fundamental check on executive power—the recognition and implementation of election results." The judges wrote that they couldn't endorse Trump's "apparent contention that the Executive has carte blanche to violate the rights of individual citizens to vote and to have their votes counted."

This twin foundation in constitutional structure and individual rights puts the opinion on the most stable possible footing.

The opinion also contends with a friend-of-the-court brief arguing that the appellate court had no power to hear the appeal before trial based on the Supreme Court's 1989 decision Midland Asphalt Corp. v. United States. It methodically reaches the sensible conclusion, albeit somewhat at odds with the language of that case, that the doctrine does not apply here. The judges reason that although the case seems to apply on its own terms, the more important point is that immunity is a right not to be tried in the first place.

Nearly as important as the court's answer to the unprecedented questions at hand is its treatment of the mandate—the official statement returning the case to the trial court and U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan. Typically such a mandate issues at least 21 days after the decision, giving the loser time to seek an en banc reconsideration of the panel's decision by the full circuit court. Here, however, the panel pointedly gave Trump only six days.

That means that if Trump can't secure a stay of the ruling by Monday, the case will return to the trial court and resume its normal course. So as a practical matter, he doesn't have time to seek an en banc rehearing by the D.C. Circuit, where his prospects would be remote in any event. Ensuring that there was no appetite for such a reconsideration among the other judges may have accounted for some of the time the panel took to rule.

Trump will therefore have to petition the Supreme Court for a stay. He is nearly certain to do so and couple it with a request that the Supreme Court hear the case. Trump has to hope for four justices to vote to hear the case and a fifth to stay the mandate; he needs both to prevent the case from resuming under Chutkan. It could go to trial by May if the ruling is not stayed.

If the Supreme Court takes the case and stays the ruling, even on a probably expedited schedule, it could take until the end of June to issue a ruling. That would mean that the earliest possible trial would be in the heat of the presidential campaign, which poses a whole host of problems that might persuade Chutkan or a higher court to apply the brakes.

With the Supreme Court already scheduled to hear arguments this week on whether Trump should be disqualified from the ballot, it's not difficult to imagine the justices passing on this one, especially in light of the lower court's comprehensive and persuasive opinion. On the other hand, it's not hard to envision the justices deciding to enter the fray and provide a definitive resolution for a case of this magnitude. Their decision could be pivotal given the crucial question of whether the trial reaches a verdict before the campaign does.

How can our federal government solve big problems? How about over dinner?

By JIM NOWLAN
Chicago Tribune

Jim Nowlan, a former state legislator, is retired from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he taught politics and public management and served as a senior fellow at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs. Decades ago, he managed U.S. Senate and presidential campaigns.

Congress is frozen. It can't even pass a budget, the fundamental task of governments. The long-term thinking is: How do we get to next week? World leaders wonder what has happened to the U.S.

All the while, big problems fester. Social Security and Medicare each face insolvency in a few years, and the national debt is soaring to unhealthy levels, with no reversal in sight, which saps funding for defense and human services.

Why doesn't our national government look ahead? After all, local governments are awash in comprehensive long-term plans. Unfortunately, there is an inverse relationship between the level at which elected officials serve and their willingness to do long-term thinking. The higher the potential political costs to state and national politicians, the less the attention to often nettlesome long-term problems.

The reasons for our congressional dysfunction are clear:

1. Polarization between evenly divided parties, which come at policy from ideological poles.

2. The unacceptable political risks of showing the courage to address problems while they are still manageable.

The political cost of displaying the mettle to manage a tough problem, as in increasing taxes or reducing spending, or a combination of the two, almost guarantees a primary nomination challenge from a congressman's right or left.

Elected officials aren't into leadership, as they proclaim, but followership of lightly informed public opinion. The lack of leadership is deepened when the problems are evident at present yet the consequences lie in the future—that is, they can be put off, though at great cost.

So, instead, elected officials play "gotcha." They condemn the other party for all the failures of humanity, when everyone knows that some degree of compromise will be required to address the big problems.

Structure is important to governments. For example, the regular meetings of the Federal Open Market Committee provide critical information to investors about the future direction of the economy.

I propose here a kind of "structured depolarization," in which the president and four top congressional leaders, plus several rotating Cabinet members, be required to sit down together over dinner, say, every two months, to wrestle with the big problems on the horizon. We might call them the Senior Council on Major Challenges. (Please, readers, come up with a better name.)

This council would be charged with reporting and recommending to Congress policies that would result, for example, in solvency for our major social safety net programs. There are more than enough talented staff at the Congressional Research Service, the executive budget office and in scores of D.C. think tanks to lay out solid policy options.

Such a council wouldn't, of course, guarantee action in the form of recommendations to and subsequent action by Congress. Yet the existence alone of a council that meets regularly could accomplish several things:

- Highlight for the American public the difficult, often costly, options that need to be considered.
- Nudge our nation's leadership into doing what they should be doing anyway.
- Spread the "blame" for any actions on tough issues. The council: "We just recommended; Congress took the action." Congress: "These were the options our leaders recommended."
- Possibly accelerate action on big, tough issues that are better dealt with sooner rather than later.

Our nation and indeed the world rely on a decisive, thoughtful America. We can't let polarization, a lack of forethought and inadequate political courage freeze us into debility. The structure of government can induce positive consequences for policymaking. Structured depolarization is needed now.

Trump carving into traditional Democratic constituency is warning for Biden

By JOE BATTENFELD
BOSTON HERALD

Donald Trump is carving into a surprising traditional Democratic constituency —Black voters —that could spell troubling news for Joe Biden in 2024.

New polls show Trump making inroads among Biden's base that carried him to the presidency in 2020, helping catapult the former president to a narrow 5-point lead over Biden.

Despite Biden's hollow and totally predictable primary victory in heavily-Black South Carolina, independents and some Democrats are abandoning the president nine months before the election.

Trump led Biden by a 47-42 point margin in the latest poll by NBC, a media organization that is not exactly friendly to Trump.

MSNBC—a liberal stalwart—aired a segment last week in which several Black voters in a South Carolina barbershop said they were considering Trump because of his economic track record. Biden easily carried South Carolina but faced only token opposition from an obscure Minnesota congressman and author Marianne Williamson. Not much of a competition.

The Biden campaign has been hammering voters with the argument that the economy is doing better with Biden.

Voters don't seem to be buying it, based on high inflation and a sense that working voters are having trouble making ends meet under the current president. The NBC poll showed Biden getting clobbered on immigration and the economy, trailing Trump by more than 20 points on which candidate is better for the economy and more than 30 points on which candidate is better at handling immigration.

And a recent New York Times/Siena College poll revealed that only seven in ten Black voters in six swing states said they would support Biden this election year—a 20-point drop from 2020.

Most of those Black voters are now considering voting for Trump—which could be devastating to Democrats.

Biden won on the backs of Black voters in the primary and general election four years ago.

"You're the reason I'm president," Biden told a mostly Black crowd. "You're the reason Donald Trump is a loser, and you're the reason we're gonna win and beat him again."

Now with polls showing Trump ahead, Biden is not quite so optimistic.

It's still nine months before the election, and Black voters could move back toward Biden again as the voting date gets closer.

But Democrats are clearly worried about the potential ramifications of Biden's base weakening.

It's one reason some Democrats are clamoring for former first lady Michelle Obama to get into the race and supplant Biden as the nominee. Expect the Michelle Obama talk to heat up as the Democratic convention draws near.

My Ukrainian friend risked all for values House Speaker Mike Johnson only claims to hold dear

By RORY FINNIN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

I wonder whether my friend Maksym Butkevych knows the name of House Speaker Mike Johnson.

Maksym is a defender of Ukraine and prisoner of war who has been held by Russian forces since 2022. There has been no word from Max since August, months before Johnson became speaker.

I do not know how much news penetrates his jail cell. Do his captors taunt him with stories about Johnson of Louisiana and his fellow House Republicans abandoning Maksym and Ukraine to the brutality of Russian invaders?

Polls show a solid majority of Americans still support financial and military aid for Ukraine in defending itself against Russia's illegal aggression. Providing such support accords with our values, boosts our economy and contributes to our security without risking American lives.

But Johnson's Republicans have let the aid run out, obstructing a $60-billion request from the White House just as Russian forces have stepped up their criminal attacks on Ukrainian civilians.

If only Mike Johnson knew Maksym Butkevych. As an avowed man of faith and patriotism, Johnson might even be inspired by him. Max has long exhibited uncommon courage in standing up for the unalienable rights we Americans purport to uphold.

Max started taking on the Soviet regime at 13. In 1990, he joined university students who went on a mass hunger strike for rights and autonomy in the Soviet Union. It was Ukraine's "Revolution on Granite," an overlooked precursor to the Orange Revolution of 2004-05 and the Revolution of Dignity (or Maidan Revolution) of 2013-14. Addressing thousands gathered on Kyiv's central square, young Max took up a microphone and called for Ukrainian independence, shouting a phrase now known around the world: " Slava Ukraini!": Glory to Ukraine!

After Ukraine won its independence, Max embarked on a career as a journalist committed to exposing post-Soviet corruption and covering the poor and marginalized. He went on to work as an advocate for those he had reported on: refugees, displaced people, members of Ukraine's LGBTQ+ community. His indiscriminate, inexhaustible compassion was recently honored with the 2023 Anne Frank Special Recognition Award, which his father, Oleksandr, accepted in his stead.

When Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014, forcing thousands of Ukrainians from their homes, Max helped unite citizens from different regions of the country, calling for"a transparent, non-corrupt system of government for the benefit of all, without regard to their origin and political opinion." When Russia tortured and jailed Ukrainian activists in occupied territory, Max tirelessly petitioned for their release around the world.

Then came Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Max was widely known as a pacifist, but he wasted no time joining Ukraine's armed forces. Many of us who knew him thought he would rather assist the millions of Ukrainians who had suddenly become refugees because of Russian brutality. But his swift decision to take up arms was a warning to us all.

Max understood something that many of us fail to grasp even after two years of Russia's full-scale war. He knew that this kind of wanton, unprovoked aggression can't be managed, negotiated or wished away from a distance. It must be fought head-on before it spreads.

"I have to put my humanitarian work and human rights activism on hold," Max said after enlisting. "There are times when you have to be ready to defend what is important. Everything else comes after victory."

Max is sacrificing everything for the ideals of freedom and equality that America cherishes. Johnson and his Republicans should be calling for his release and doing everything in their power to aid his people and enable their victory. Instead, they're stonewalling bipartisan legislation that most Americans support and enabling an aggressor state that openly fantasizes about our division and destruction.

I wonder whether my friend Maksym Butkevych knows the name of House Speaker Mike Johnson. And I wonder whether Max sees us, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, hanging our heads in shame.

Rory Finnin is a professor of Ukrainian studies at the University of Cambridge and the author of Blood of Others: Stalin's Crimean Atrocity and the Poetics of Solidarity.

NO

From page 8

refuse to act on immigration and the border, the latter should be able to quite simply point to the half-year of careful back-and-forth that Johnson and his cadre decided to toss into the garbage at Trump's behest.

They are unserious about acting even on an issue that they've claimed to be their primary and urgent legislative focus, let alone anything else. Neither their colleagues nor voters should take them seriously.

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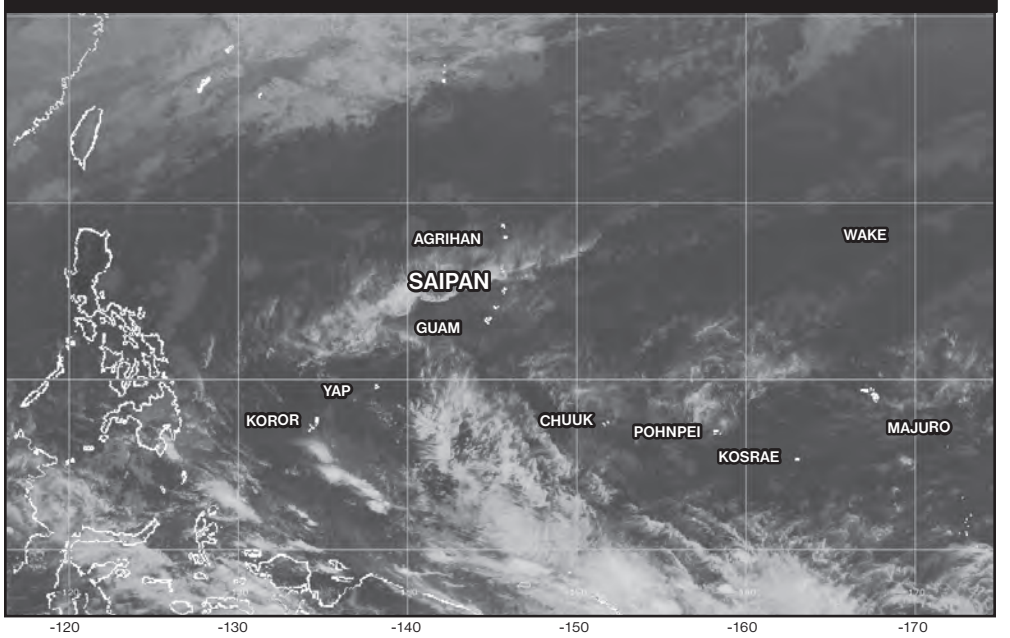
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Breezy, mainly during daytime hours. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Breezy, mainly during daytime hours. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Breezy, mainly during daytime hours. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86 / 74°	86 / 75°	86 / 75°	85 / 75°	85 / 75°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:40 AM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows some patchy mid and upper level clouds over the region. Both Saipan and Guam have reported passing layers of strato-cumulus clouds at times. Surface winds are gentle this morning from the northeast. Ipan Buoy is out-of-service but Saipan Buoy shows combined seas only 4 to 5 feet from north-northeast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Fair	86° / 75°
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Showers	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 81°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 82°
Majuro	Cloudy	86° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Sunday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Monday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Tuesday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:01 AM	5:34 PM	-
Saturday	6:54 AM	6:40 PM	-
Sunday	7:42 AM	7:42 PM	-
Monday	8:27 AM	8:42 PM	-
Tuesday	9:09 AM	9:40 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	79° / 62°
Beijing	Fair	42° / 24°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	62° / 52°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	78° / 71°
London	Cloudy	57° / 40°
Los Angeles	Rain	59° / 47°
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	91° / 77°
Melbourne	Fair	74° / 59°
Miami	Cloudy	34° / 31°
New York	Fair	48° / 33°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	50° / 37°
Paris	Rain	55° / 52°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	48° / 34°
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	61° / 45°
Salem	Clear	61° / 35°
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	53° / 49°
Seoul	Sunny	39° / 21°
Tokyo	Sunny	50° / 36°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 32°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:03 AM	Low Tide	-0.71
8:19 AM	High Tide	1.80
1:28 PM	Low Tide	1.12
6:26 PM	High Tide	1.92

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR

Things you didn't know about Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is celebrated by more than 20% of the world. It's the most important holiday in China and to Chinese people all over. Here are 21 interesting facts that you probably didn't know about Chinese New Year.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

People stay up on Chinese New Year's Eve and set off firecrackers at midnight. In the morning, firecrackers are used again to welcome the new year and good luck. Both firecrackers and fireworks sound throughout the night.

1 Chinese New Year is also known as the Spring Festival

In China, you'll hear it being called *chunjie* (春节), or the Spring Festival. It's still very wintry, but the holiday marks the end of the coldest days. People welcome spring and what it brings along: planting and harvests, new beginnings and fresh starts.

You can also call it the Lunar New Year, because countries such as North and South Korea and Vietnam celebrate it as well. And because the Spring Festival goes according to the lunar calendar. Which means…

2 There's no set date for Chinese New Year

According to the Lunar calendar, the Spring Festival is on January 1st and lasts until the 15th (the full moon). Unlike western holidays such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, when you try to calculate it with the solar (Gregorian) calendar, the date is all over the place.

Chinese New Year ranges from Jan. 21 to Feb. 20. In 2024, it occurs on Feb. 10.'

Modern Chinese calendars use the Gregorian calendar but include lunar holidays.

The lunar calendar is still really important in China, even though it has officially moved to the Gregorian calendar like

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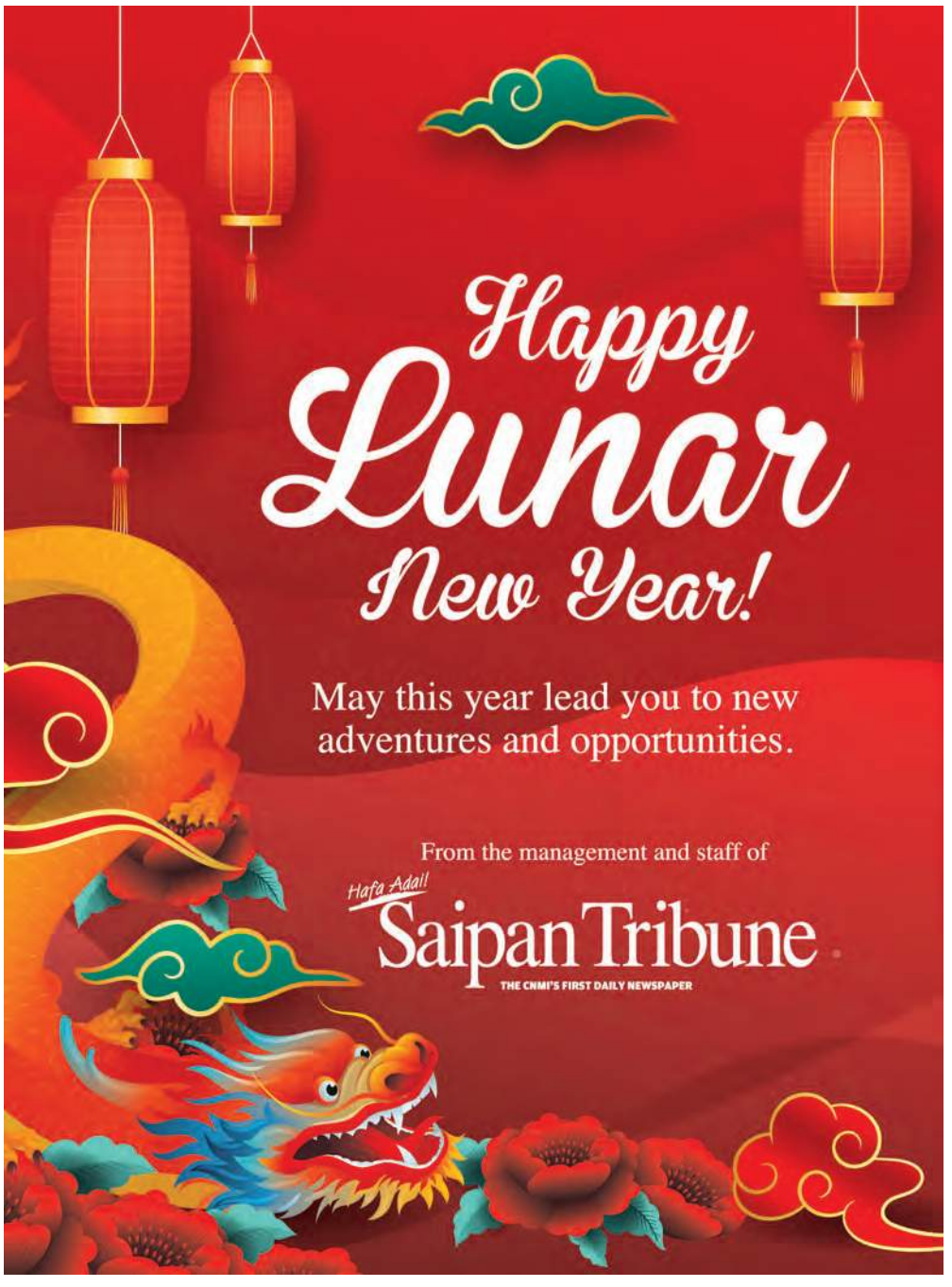
Happy Lunar New Year!
May this year lead you to new adventures and opportunities.
From the management and staff of
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Happy Lunar New Year!
May the energy of this year bring you good fortune and happiness.
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the rest of the world. All traditional holidays and days such as the Winter Solstice are celebrated. Some people still calculate their birthdays and ages according to the lunar calendar too!

3 It is a day for praying to gods...

The Spring Festival was originally a ceremonial day to pray to gods for a good planting and harvest season. As an agrarian society, the harvest was everything. People also prayed to their ancestors, as they were treated as gods (see Mulan for reference).

The best foods are offered to the gods.

4 ...and fighting off monsters

But the myths are much more interesting. According to one legend, there was a monster named Nian (年). It would come about every New Year's Eve. Most people would hide in their homes. But one boy was brave enough to fight him off using firecrackers. The next day, people celebrated their survival by setting off even more firecrackers. And that practice became a crucial part of the Spring Festival.

5 The most fireworks are set off in the world that night

As in the myth about Nian, firecrackers are supposed to scare off monsters and bad luck. So people stay up on Chinese New Year's Eve and set off firecrackers at midnight. In the morning, firecrackers are used again to welcome the new year and good luck.

Both firecrackers and fireworks sound throughout the night.

That same night, families also burn fake paper money and printed gold bars in honor of their deceased loved ones. Similar to the Korean Chuseok holiday or the Mexican Day of the Dead traditions, they believe the offerings will bring fortune and good luck to their ancestors in the afterlife.

6 (but sometimes it's illegal)

Due to safety reasons and concerns for air pollution, many Chinese cities have banned fireworks. More than 500 cities have restrictions too.

But...many people don't care and they do it anyway. Beijing had banned fireworks for 13 years. The ban was lifted in 2006 because of the angry public.

If you're in China during this time, you'll probably be able to hear and see the explosions for at least 3 nights (and it can go on for weeks).

7 It is the longest Chinese holiday

The Spring Festival is technically 15 days. But celebrations start on New Year's Eve (making it 16 days). You can also say that the holiday season starts in (lunar) December with the Laba Festival (腊八节 / là bā jié). That's around 40 days of celebrations!

During the holiday, Chinese people spend twice as much on shopping and eating out than Americans spend on Thanksgiving.

Traditionally, you have to spend time with your family and can only go out after the 5th day. It's a national holiday. The large majority of stores are closed too.

So in the month before, people will buy nian huo (年货), or New Year's products. The Chinese stock up on cooking supplies, snacks, Gifts, new clothes and more.

8 The Spring Festival causes the largest human migration in the world

The most important part of Chinese New Year is the family reunion. Everyone should come back home for the New Year's Eve dinner.

But since in modern China, most elderly parents live in rural villages while their children work in the cities. The migration back home and to go on vacation is called *chunyun* (春运), or Spring Migration.

Even on normal days, subways to work are jammed pack with people just barely squishing past the door. You can imagine the intensity of the *chunyun*.

Plus, the earliest you can buy train tickets is 60 days before. It leads to a mad rush of literally fighting for tickets. In 2015, statistics showed that around 1,000 tickets were sold each second.

9 Singles hire fake boy/girlfriends to take home

You know those nosy relatives during Thanksgiving? It's even worse in China. Especially since having children and passing down the family name is one of the most important parts in Chinese culture.

Some desperate singles resort to hire a fake boyfriend or girlfriend to take home. Those who can't (or don't want to) go home can rent themselves out. For some of the other questions though, such as your salary, career or when you want to have kids, can't be helped.

10 No showering, sweeping or throwing out garbage allowed!

Showering isn't allowed New Year's Day. Sweeping and throwing out garbage isn't allowed before the 5th. This is to make sure you don't wash away the good luck!

On the other hand, there's a day before the Spring Festival dedicated to cleaning. This day is to sweep the bad luck away and make room for the good.

Most hair salons are closed during the entirety of Chinese New Year because hair cutting is taboo.

What else is taboo during Chinese New Year?

Hair cutting (before Feb. 2)

Using scissors, knives and other sharp things

Arguing, swearing

Saying unlucky words (such as "death" and "sickness")

Breaking things

11 Children receive lucky money in red envelopes

In other cultures, children receive gifts for holidays. Gifts are also exchanged during the Spring Festival. But Chinese children receive something else too—red envelopes.

Depending on the family, the children can get up 1000 CNY (around $150) per

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envelope.

Also called red packets or pockets, they include money. This money is supposed to help transfer fortune from the elders to the kids. They can also be given between bosses and employees, co-workers, and friends.

With the development of technology, digital red pockets are the trend now. People like to send one into group chats and watch the others fight for the money. This is called *qiang hongbao* (抢红包), or literally "snatching red pockets."

12 You eat dumplings for every meal, every day

Well, technically you're supposed to. But not many people do that anymore because you can have too much of even the most delicious foods. So most people will eat dumplings during the New Year's Eve dinner. Others will eat them for the first breakfast.

Dumplings with Chinese New Year decorations.

Contrary to popular belief though, dumplings aren't popular everywhere in China. It's more of a northern thing. In the South, people would rather eat spring rolls (egg rolls) and balls of glutinous rice in soup called *tangyuan* (汤圆).

13 Chinese New Year desserts have special meanings

A lot cultures have symbolic foods, such as the Yule Log cake. But so many Chinese New Year desserts have special meanings behind them. And it's mostly puns in the name.

Make sure you get your fill of meaningful desserts!

Take the tangyuan for example. It literally means "soup balls." But it sounds like *tuanyuan* (团圆), which means reunion. So it's no surprise it's a popular dessert during Chinese New Year.

Nian gao (年糕) is a type of rice cake. It symbolizes success each and every year.

Fa gao (发糕) is a the hybrid of sponge cakes and muffins. People dye it festive colors. The fa is the same as in *fa cai* (发财), which means "to get rich." And everyone wants that!

Isn't it nice to have a better reason to get seconds?

14 There's wine specifically for the Spring Festival

Chinese people love drinking. There's a saying that there's no manners and/or

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May the energy of this year bring you good fortune and happiness.
Happy Lunar New Year!
2024
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Western Union Agent | Location | Contact Number | Business Hours
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Insurance & Business Management Corporation | HDH Building, Garapan | 1-670-234-7888 | 8:00AM-6:00PM (M-F) / 8:00AM-4:00PM (S)
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E-Center Remittance | Middle Road, Gualo Rai | 1-670-233-5252 | 8:00AM-2:00PM (M-F)
Island Best Choice | Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe | 1-670-235-2883 | 9:00AM-6:00PM (M-F) / 8:00AM-4:00PM (S)
Armatech Remittance | Beach Road, Chalan Kanoa | 1-670-234-8894 | 10:00AM-6:00PM (M-F) /1:00PM-6:00PM (S)
Islander Mini Mart | Beach Road, San Antonio | 1-670-234-5031 | 7:00AM-7:00PM (M-SUN)
Islander Rent A Car | Airport Road, Dandan | 1-670-235-8233 | 8:00AM-5:00PM (M-F)
TINIAN
Tinian Fuel Services | San Jose, Tinian | 1-670-433-4428 | 8:00AM-5:00PM (M-S) / 8:00AM-12:00PM (SUN)
ROTA
Rota Merchandising Corporation | Songsong, Rota | 1-670-532-0401 | 9:00AM-2:00PM (M-F)
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2024 龙腾四海
SAIPAN, CNMI

Happy Chinese Spring Festival

2024 LION DANCE SCHEDULE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024

甲辰年 龙年大吉

龙呈祥瑞新景满宝岛

春溢华光欢歌遍九洲

No.	Company	Time
1	(Tan Holdings)TSL Plaza	8:00 am
2	Century Hotel	8:20 am
3	Century JP Center	8:40 am
4	Transamerica	9:00 am
5	Saipan Computer Services	9:20 am
6	Shirley's Coffee Shop	9:45 am
7	UIC	10:00 am
8	POI/Century Tours Office	10:20 am
9	IT&E	10:30 am
10	Hyatt Regency	11:00 am
11	Aqua Resort Club	11:30 am
12	Fork & Spoon Restaurant	11:50 am
13	Canton Restaurant	12:00 pm
14	Pho Tam Vietnamese Cuisine	12:20 pm
15	Majesty Restaurant	12:35 pm
16	Crowne Plaza Resort	1:00 pm
17	I Shop	1:20 pm
18	Sea Touch (Let's go)	1:30 pm
19	Pacific Islands Club	2:10 pm
20	Burger Comer & Associates	2:35 pm
21	The A.R.C.	2:50 pm
22	DFS/T-Galleria	3:00 pm
23	CTSI & D & Q	3:30 pm
24	Dollar Days	4:00 pm

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etiquette without wine. This means that you need to have wine for every ceremony, festival or important dinner.

There's wine for engagement dinners, weddings, birthdays...and of course, the Spring Festival. With such a rich wine culture, it's no surprise that there is a bunch of drinking games you play. However, it's not all fun and games.

When you're eating with someone older than you, as is the case with New Year's dinners, you need to follow strict toasting etiquette rules. They include the order of toasts, seating, how you hold the wine glass etc. etc. To learn more read our post on Chinese New Year's drinks and etiquette.

15 The Chinese decorate everything red for Chinese New Year

Every family will deck their homes in this color. Do you remember the story about Nian? Firecrackers aren't the only thing that scared the monster away. Red is also an invaluable weapon, and used in nearly all Chinese New Year decorations.

Red is China's favorite color and it's pretty obvious during Chinese New Year.

The Chinese will hang up red lanterns and strings of (real or fake) chili peppers, paste red paper onto doors and windows, and more!

New clothes are also believed to bring good luck and start over fresh. People will add new red clothing to their Spring Festival wardrobe too.

16 Every year has a zodiac animal

Western astrology includes 12 zodiac signs, one for each month. There are 12 Chinese zodiacs as well, but the animal is for the entire year.

They are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig

2024 is the Year of the Dragon. Some of the animals (such as Rat, Snake, Dog and Pig) aren't normally well-liked in Chinese culture. But as a zodiac, their positive traits are bestowed on people born that year.

They play a much bigger role than in Western cultures. Your animal can decide your career, health and relationship success. Make sure you find out what zodiac animal you are!

17 Your zodiac year is bad luck

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Happy Lunar New Year!

Wishing you strength and success as you navigate the new year ahead.

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Your *benming* year (本命年 / běn mìng nián) is the year of your zodiac animal. And of the 12 year cycle, it is the unluckiest for you.

There are multiple explanations for this. The Chinese believe that children can easily be taken by demons. And your *benming* year is your rebirth year.

There's also a mythological creature named Pi Xiu (貔貅) that you can wear as an accessory for good luck.

During this year, your weapon of defense is the color red. Just as you can decorate your home in red for protection and fortune, you can also wear red clothing. Many people will wear red underwear every day of the year. Others add on red shirts, pants, jewelry, insoles and more!

18 You grow 1 year older on the Spring Festival

In China, you have a "real" age (实岁 / shí suì) and a "fake" nominal age (虚岁 / xū suì). The real age is the one we all know about. You grow one year older on your birthday. The nominal age though, increases with the Spring Festival.

This was the age most people went with until recent times. But it's still common nowadays, or used interchangeably. If you're particular about it, make sure you ask!

19 The New Year greeting in Chinese is "xin nian kuai le"

The phrase literally means "Happy New Year." But in Hong Kong and other Cantonese-speaking regions, it's more common to say *"gong hei fat choy."* In Mandarin Chinese, it's *"gong xi fa cai"* (恭喜发财). It means "congratulations on the fortune."

Calligraphy with New Year blessings.

If you check out other greetings or blessings, you'll see that most are about:

- Plentiful harvests
- Wealth and fortune
- Health and longevity
- Having children and large families

Food, money and health are things that everyone wants. Passing down the family name is of utmost importance. That's one of the reasons why China has such a large population.

20 Chinese New Year ends with the Lantern Festival

The first full moon of the (lunar) year is the Yuanxiao Festival (元宵节 / yuán xiāo jié) or Lantern Festival (灯节 / dēng jié). Though family is still important, it's still a night of partying and freedom.

Lanterns come in all shapes, sizes and colors.

In ancient times, girls weren't allowed to venture outside by themselves. But on this night, they were able to walk around, moon-gaze and look at the beautiful lanterns. Because of this, it's also known as Valentine's Day in China.

21 Chinese New Year is celebrated all around the world

One out of every 5 people in the world is Chinese. But that stat doesn't include the millions of overseas Chinese and people of Chinese descent.

London, England; San Francisco, USA; Sydney, Australia; all claim to have the biggest Spring Festival celebrations outside of Asia. We're can't say if that's true or not. But if you have a Chinatown nearby, you can definitely get a feel of what the celebrations are like.

Make sure you go check out the parades, lion dances, lantern statues, fireworks and amazing food!

Editor's Note: Originally posted in https://chinesenewyear.net/21-things-you-didnt-know-about-chinese-new-year/

Happy Lunar New Year!

May the abundance of this year bring joy to you and your family.

Greetings From

Tan Holdings

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Tan Siu Lin Foundation

US Coast Guard supports joint cast and recovery training in Guam

USCG

U.S. Army Scouts stand for a photo with U.S. Coast Guard members with a U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter over Apra Harbor, Guam, on Feb. 1, 2024. In a demonstration of inter-service cooperation and expertise, the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor's 45-foot Response Boat-Medium supported an intricate cast and recovery training exercise. This vital training involved collaboration with the U.S. Army Scouts from the 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Raiders of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), 25th Infantry Division, and the U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25—the "Island Knights," based at Andersen Air Force Base.

SANTA RITA, Guam—In a demonstration of inter-service cooperation and expertise, the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor's 45-foot Response Boat-Medium supported an intricate cast and recovery training exercise in Apra Harbor on Feb. 1, 2024.

This vital training involved collaboration with the U.S. Army Scouts from the 3rd Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Raiders of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and the U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25-the "Island Knights," based at Andersen Air Force Base.

"The purpose of the training was to certify seven new helocast masters. Using helicopters greatly expands the distance a reconnaissance boat crew can conduct operations. The helocast exercise surpassed all expectations and greatly contributed to our ability to train, fight when called upon, and win in the Pacific," said Sgt. 1st Class Brendan Spangler with the U.S. Army Comanche Troop 3rd Squadron 4th Cavalry Regiment.

The specialized cast and recovery operations, essential for maritime stability and security, saw the Island Knights of HSC-25 expertly pilot the MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter, allowing the Scouts to deploy from the helicopter. They were then recovered from the water by the U.S. Coast Guard crew. The rescue boat crew also served as a safety resource for the exercise, ready to support in any emergency situation. This exercise underscores the seamless interoperability and mutual support among the U.S. military branches, enhancing readiness and effectiveness in various environments.

"As the only forward-deployed naval forces HSC expeditionary squadron, HSC-25 is fortunate to integrate and train with our joint partners in the region," said Cmdr. Neil Toohey, commander, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25. "Exercises like this help maintain our advantage and highlight the unique capability of naval rotary wing aviation. I'm proud of the collaborative efforts between HSC-25, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia, and the 4th Cavalry Regiment to shape a more agile and responsive joint force."

The support available from partners in Guam led the Scouts to travel from Hawaii for the opportunity. The training reinforces the capability of forces to operate cohesively and enhances the interoperability among the U.S. military branches. Such collaborations are crucial for crisis response, cooperation, and maritime security, contributing to regional stability and safety.

"This joint effort exemplifies the commitment of the U.S. Coast Guard to work cooperatively with the Army and Navy to foster a secure, prepared, and resilient force," said Capt. Nicholas Simmons, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "One of our 11 missions from Congress is defense readiness. Supporting the training requirements of our partners reflects our dedication to that strategic partnership and the collaboration necessary for addressing shared challenges to ensure regional maritime safety and security."

Located aboard Naval Base Guam, U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor crews play a crucial role in maritime safety and security through its primary missions of search and rescue, law enforcement, and protecting living marine resources and critical infrastructures. Tasked with locating and assisting individuals in distress at sea, enforcing maritime laws to prevent illegal activities such as smuggling and illegal fishing, and safeguarding marine habitats and critical resources like ports and maritime transportation systems, the station crew exemplifies the Service's commitment to maintaining safety and legal order in its operational waters. As an integral part of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, Station Apra Harbor also engages in joint operations and exercises with other agencies, significantly enhancing their capabilities to fulfill these essential missions.

The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam team focuses on maritime safety, security, and stewardship in Oceania. With a primary presence in Guam and Saipan and around 300 members across Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the team maintains a strong U.S. presence in the Micronesia sub-region and adjacent areas, closely tied to local communities.

U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, known as the "Island Knights," is a critical MH-60S Knighthawk expeditionary helicopter squadron based at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. As the island's sole permanently stationed naval aviation and rotary wing asset, HSC-25 is vital in supporting the U.S. 7th Fleet. The squadron provides combat-ready crews and aircraft for various operations, including combat logistics, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance. HSC-25 stands out as Guam's only search and rescue helicopter platform, leading their team to conduct more search and rescue missions than any other Navy helicopter squadron, underscoring this essential service and support to the communities of the Marianas.

The 3rd Squadron of the 4th Cavalry Regiment, known as the "Raiders," is a prestigious unit within the U.S. Army, based in Hawaii, as part of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. With a rich heritage dating back to the mid-19th century, the squadron carries on the legacy of the 4th Cavalry Regiment through its commitment to excellence in various missions, including combat operations, peacekeeping, and support roles. The "Raiders" epitomize the regiment's storied past by upholding its traditions of valor and effectiveness in modern military objectives. ***(USCG)***

Responders conduct successful pollution training, supporting Guam's spill response readiness

SANTA RITA, Guam—Responders and the U.S. Coast Guard held a three-day oil spill response certification course required under the Code of Federal Regulations for First Responder Operations Level Training given at Cabras Marine Guam from Jan. 17-19, 2024, focused on operational requirements for responding to pollution spills, particularly with oil spill recovery organizations.

"We had the opportunity to take part in and observe their strategy, and they successfully finished the exercise by showcasing their professional knowledge and response skills," stated Lt. j.g. Whip Blacklaw, chief of the Incident Management Division at U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

They deployed over 450 feet of boom and utilized equipment like drum skimmers following a geographic response strategy outlined in the Area Contingency Plan. The ACP is a comprehensive strategy for responding to environmental disasters in specific geographic regions, which is important for effective preparedness and response activities.

According to Blacklaw, local stakeholders, including OSROCO and others participated in a spill response exercise that exceeded expectations, as demonstrated by their "professionalism in promptly identifying the simulated discharge and swiftly mobilizing resources on-site, showcased efficiency and effectiveness."

USCG

Responders deploy equipment for an oil spill response certification course required under the Code of Federal Regulations for First Responder Operations Level Training on Jan. 18, 2024, in Guam, focused on operational requirements for responding to pollution spills, particularly with oil spill recovery organizations. They deployed over 450 feet of boom and utilized equipment like drum skimmers following a geographic response strategy outlined in the Area Contingency Plan, a comprehensive strategy for responding to environmental disasters in specific geographic regions, which is important for effective preparedness and response activities.

The exercise involved a crew of shoreside spill responders, a jet ski operator, and a small boat crew to set up containment for a simulated pipeline rupture near the Harbor of Refuge in Guam. The U.S. Coast Guard and local stakeholders observed the response strategy, which showcased their professional capabilities and strengthened partnerships. Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexander Brenton, a marine science technician, collaborated with Blacklaw throughout the training, with the U.S. Coast Guard offering insights into procedures and tactics.

This training is crucial for better preparedness in the event of future spills, with ongoing efforts to refine tools and prevent future incidents overseen by the incident management division within the response department. It enhances partnerships with local stakeholders and OSROCOs, expanding the network of capabilities and communication channels for improved response posture.

The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam team focuses on maritime safety, security, and stewardship in Oceania. With a primary presence in Guam and Saipan and around 300 members across Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the team maintains a strong U.S. presence in the Micronesia sub-region and adjacent areas, closely tied to local communities. ***(USCG)***

Business

Keep the romance alive at Giovanni's

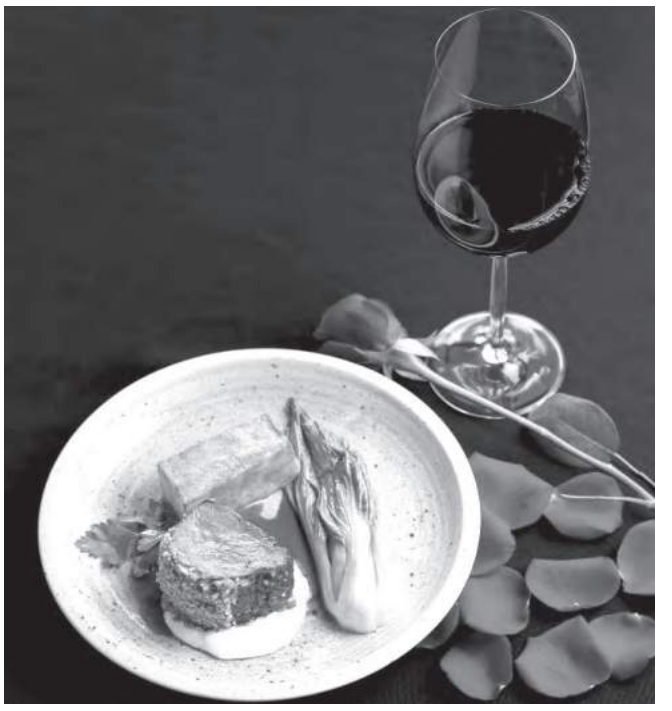
The most romantic day of the year is here and Hyatt Regency Saipan has prepared something special for you and your love. Get the chance to seat your lady or get the chance to honor your man and savor Giovanni's romantic ambiance and delightful music in the background with a five-course meal dinner on Valentine's Day Wednesday, Feb. 14, from 6pm to 9pm.

Hyatt executive chef Christopher Adams and his culinary team vow to impress and have planned an elegant night full of flavor, excitement and love to make this Valentine's Day unforgettable. The five-course meal includes a complimentary glass of wine and features a gastronomical journey from hors d'oeuvres, soup, and appetizer, to the main entrée and dessert. This dinner special will also highlight chef Adams' own signature version of charakilis, a famous local dish.

This will be Adams' first Valentine's dinner special since he came back to Saipan and, according to him, he is thrilled to continue his hospitality journey with Hyatt Hotels & Resorts and is excited to return to Saipan.

HYATT

Giovanni's five-course meal features Egyptian dukkah crusted beef tenderloin with sautéed bok choi, potato millefuille, goat cheese cream, and mint jus.



Adams joined the Hyatt Regency Saipan team last month, with 25 years of culinary experience in tow. He is a culinary arts graduate from Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island USA and is not stranger to the Marianas. Adams was executive chef of Saipan Grand Hotel from 2005 to 2006, acting executive chef at Pacific Island Club Guam from 2008 to 2016, and Food & Beverage director and executive chef at Leo Palace in Guam from 2016 to 2018. His culinary journey has also taken him to South Korea, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and his previous engagement was at Marriot Lake George in New York.

The Giovanni's Valentine's Day five-course meal special dinner is one delectable offering after another in a memorable setting for only $85 per person and $75 for Club at the Hyatt members. Keep the romance alive at Hyatt Regency Saipan where every dish is thoughtfully prepared, served, and every detail considered. For reservations, visit saipan.regency.hyatt.com or call (670) 234-1234. ***(Hyatt)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-004

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE WATERLINE INSTALLATION PHASE I PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of installation of new distribution line along Commonwealth Drive; connecting the new waterline to existing water mains; and installation of a new pressure reducing valve. The work is also inclusive of installation of new service laterals and water meters with individual pressure reducing valves, and relocation or reconnection of existing service laterals to new distribution line also with individual pressure reducing valve. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 270 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 23, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-004, Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Phase I Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at *manny.sablan@cucgov.org* with a copy to Mr. Aristotle Anicete, Project Engineer – via email at *aristotle.anicete@cucgov.org* and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at *christie.sablan@cucgov.org*

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Kanto Diyes expands, adds new items to menu

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Not even a year open and Kanto Diyes has already expanded its restaurant two-fold with the acquisition of the lease of Jacob's Barbecue and Bakeshop next door.

Owner Dante Suarez Conlu said the expansion has allowed Kanto Diyes to accommodate more customers as the common complaint about their restaurant was its small space and lack of parking.

"We could only fit in 20 customers before, but now we're up to 50 seats with the expansion to the adjacent space. Honestly, we had no choice but to turn away frustrated customers before because we're always full, but with the additional space, we can now welcome more diners," he said.

MARK RABAGO

Kanto Diyes is located along Flores Rosa Street corner Alaihai Avenue near the back of Dollar Days in Garapan.

Another positive offshoot of the bigger space is Kanto Diyes can now accept reservations, whether it be small or large group reservations.

"Because of the limited space we couldn't guarantee anyone a table, but now that we have double the dine-in capacity we're not only open for reservations but can also now accommodate large groups," said Conlu.

As part of its expansion, Kanto Diyes also introduced two new items on its menu with more traditional Filipino dishes on the way.

Starting this February, longanisa chorizo and hotdog combo, grilled prawn set, and beef short ribs are now part of Kanto Diyes' stapples.

Conlu said very soon they will also be serving a pork belly set and spareribs barbe-

See KANTO on Page 19

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

AMENDED REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICES

SAIPAN HARBOR DREDGING PROJECT
PORT OF SAIPAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-002-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design and Planning Services for the Saipan Harbor Dredging Project at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-002-24.

The project is being funded by the U.S. Maritime Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri LLagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, February 16, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their professional qualification statements, no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 7, 2024

KANTO

From page 18

MARK RABAGO

Kanto Diyes can now comfortably seat 50 dine-in customers.

MARK RABAGO

Kanto Diyes' longanisa chorizo and hotdog combo.

cue and introduce a slew of cold non-alcoholic drinks like fruit juices.

Kanto Diyes also recently launched its unlimited rice promotion for Monday and Tuesday, which had been a hit for youngsters but not so much for the older customers who are cutting down on their rice consumption. So far, Conlu said the record for unlimited rice is five cups.

At the end of the day, he said Kanto Diyes is always about customer satisfaction and that's the reason why they expanded their restaurant, added new items to its menu, and started an unlimited rice promo.

One example of Conlu and company's adherence to this motto is Kanto Diyes giving a diner short of cash a free meal when he and his group of friends patronized the restaurant recently.

"I think he was short of budget and we felt bad that his friends we're enjoying a meal and he was just there to sit and watch. So, we gave him something on the house," he said.

Kanto Diyes is open for dine-in and takeout every day from 11am to 9:30pm. It can seat a maximum of 50 customers and is located along Flores Rosa Street corner Alaihai Avenue near the back of Dollar Days in Garapan.

For more information, to reserve, or to order in advance, call (670) 989-2728 or email dconlu30@gmail.com. Kanto Diyes is also on Facebook.

NORTHERN MARIANAS COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE
P.O. BOX 506689, SAIPAN, MP 96950
PHONE: 670.234.3878

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence's mission is to promote, nourish, and sustain a collective movement against violence. All applicants must be familiar with and agree with NMCADSV's mission to eliminate domestic and sexual violence.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Program Assistant
Salary Range: $10.00/hr to $14.00/hr

Job Summary
The Program Assistant will work with the Executive Director of NMCADSV and its Board to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. The Program Assistant will support the daily operations of NMCADSV, including support for NMCADSV staff, the Executive Director and/or NMCADSV Board/Members, as assigned.

Duties
- Confers with and reports to the Executive Director
- Assists with the coordination of all NMCADSV activities; including event planning, logistics for NMCADSV and Board meetings, prepartion of materials, and travel logistics
- Provides administrative and clerical support to the Executive Director and the NMCADSV Board of Directors and Members; including receiving calls, receiving and logging mail, and maintaining records, as assigned
- Maintains and manages the NMCADSV membership database
- Assists with finance and operations of the NMCADSV; including daily bookkeeping, vendor relations and record keeping
- Attends all meetings and conference calls, as requested
- Travels to national and inter-island meetings and conferences, as required by the Executive Director
- Oversees the maintenance of office equipment and manages office inventory
- Assists the Executive Director in grants management, including the preparation of application packets and gathering data for reports
- Performs other duties, as assigned

Minimum Qualifications
- High School Diploma, or equivalent
- An agreement with NMCADSV's mission statement and philosophy regarding the elimination of domestic and sexual violence
- Experience in providing clerical and administrative support, including record keeping
- Demonstrated abilities in verbal and written communication
- Proficiency in MS Word and Excel
- Willingness to learn in all areas of NMCADSV operations
- Flexible Schedule
- Must be able to travel

Highly Desired Qualifications
- 1 year of documented experience/work with non-profit organizations or volunteerism
- Own transportation, with documented insurance, registration, and a valid driver's license

To Apply:
A **Resume and Cover Letter** should be submitted on or before 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, February 9, 2024**. Provide a list (not copies) of any certifications and/or awards. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submit **resume and cover letter** to alleny@endviolencenmi.org, deliver to NMCADSV's office **(between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.)** at the Marina Heights I Building (2nd Floor, Suite 206) or mail to NMCADSV, P.O. Box 506689, Saipan, MP 96950. (Mailed applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline.) Applicants who are invited for an interview will be asked to bring a copy of their Diploma or equivalent, Police Clearance (within the last 30 days), valid Passport, and a list of references. NMCADSV is an equal opportunity employer. Individuals from under-served communities are encouraged to apply.

This project is 100% supported by federal grants, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice and Grant # G-2301MPSD-VC awarded by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this release are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS
P.O Box 500830, Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No (670) 234-3751/52/52 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Facebook: facebook.com/DPLCNMI

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 011 L 03, containing an area of approximately 241,037 square meters, Lot 011 L 04, containing an area of approximately 337,564 square meters, and Lot 011 L 02 R/W, containing an area of approximately 2,984 square meters situated in Unai Dankulu, Saipan. A map showing the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective Lessee is Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort. The list of officers for Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort: Hosik (Brian), Shin, as President, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park, as Vice President and Ji Eun Lee, as Secretary/ Treasurer.

Principal shareholders of Suwaso Corporation is Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort, mainly by Hosik (Brian) Shin and Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. The Lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a Hotel and Golf Complex.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 40 years with an extension of up to 15 years with approval of the Legislature in accordance with P.L. 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).

The proposed annual rental during the term of the lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

v. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Unai Dangkulu, Saipan.

vi. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before February 12, 2024, at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian. A public hearing will be held if requested during the comment period.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TÅNU´ PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku mannånå'i huyung nutisia guini put i intension-ñiha para u ma'atkila metton na tanu' pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Mariånas. Maseha håyi na pattidå intirisao gi halum hiniråt pupbliku siña muna'hålum upiñon, infotmasion, pat testimoniun kinontra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para i atkilon nu i tanu' pupbliku. Komu mapribeni mås mo'na ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattitiyi pettanesi na infotmasion manisisita para u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbliku madiskribi komu Lot 011 L 03 ni kunsissisti kåsi 241,037 square meters, Lot 011 L04, ni kunsissisti kåsi 337,564 square meters, yan Lot 011 L02 R/W, ni kunsissisti kåsi 2,984 square meters ni gaigi gi hålum Unai Dangkulu, iya Saipan. I måpa ni ina'a'annuk i lugåt managuaha gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku para inspeksión.

ii. I prospective lessee i Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort. I listan nu ufisiåt siha para i Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort: Si Hosik (Brian), Shin, komu Presidenti, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park, komu Sigundu Presidenti yan si Ji Eun Lee, komu Sekritåriu/Tresureru.

I prinsipåt na shareholders nu Suwaso Corporation sa i Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon ha tattiyi i regulasion DPL siha yan ginen manegosiu ni ufisiåt yan direktot nu Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort, mayotmenti ginen as Hosik (Brian), Shin yan si Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. I lessee debi na u usa i lugåt put atyu ha' na rason nu i Hotel and Golf Complex.

I tema nu i maproponi na kontråtan atkilon sa' kuarenta (40) åñus na tiempu yan i ekstensión asta kinsi åñus na tiempu yan i inaprueban i Lehislatura sigun yan i P.L. 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).

I maproponi na atkilon gi kada' såkkan gi durântin teman kontråtan i` atkilon mapega gi put sientus i bålin "appraised fair market" i propiedåt yan i aplikåo na put sientus nu i "Business Gross Receipts" gi halum i regulasion DPL.

v. I kopian nu i maproponi na kuntråtan atkilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku, ni gaigi gi sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan i Joeten Dandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, primet (1st) na bibiendan i De'Ana Commercial Building, iya Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet (1st) na bibiendan i PM Building, giya Tini'an. I kopia debi lokkui' na u managuaha online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. I Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku tåya marisibi ni håfa na tinahguin inofresi siha ni para u ma'atkila i suhetu na tanu' pupbliku gi Unai Dangkulu, giya Saipan.

vii. I Sekritåriun Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku debi na u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, infotmasion, testimoniun kinontra pat tinahguin prinoponi siha ginin i manintirisão na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Fibreru 12, 2024, gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Sa'ipan, Luta pat Tini'an. I inekkunguk pupbliku siempri magopti yanggin marikuesta gi durånti i tiempun upiñon.

ARONGORONGOL PPWOMMWOL ATKILÓÓNOL FALUWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) reel Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re isiisiwow arongorong igha re mángemángil rebwe atkkilaay faluweer toulap llól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúw kka Efáng llól Marianas. Schóó kka re tipáli sángi toulap emmwel rebwe isiisilong ischil kkapas, data, views, ngare angiingil ppwomm ikka aa siiwel ngáli ppwommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap. Re bwal ayoora sángi Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e ffil ebwe akkatééwow e amwirimwiritiw:

i. Ppwommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap e bwáá bwe Lot 011 L 03, e lo 241,037 reel square meters, Lot 011 L 04, iye e lo bwe 337,564 reel square meters, me Lot 011 L 02 R/W, iye e lo bwe 2,984 reel square meters iye e lo Unai Dankulu, Seipél. E bwáálló wóól móópal falúw eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap reel ubwe amwuri.

ii. Ppwommwol schóól atkkilóón nge Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point. List-al officers ngáli Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point: Mr. Hosik (Brian), Shin, bwe President, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park Liang, bwe Vice President me Ji Eun Lee, bwe Sekkretóóriyo/Treasurer.Principal shareholder-il Suwaso Corporation nge Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. Ppwommwol atkkilóón e angúúngú fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sángi officers me directors-il Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point, spesiatmente Hosik (Brian) Shin me Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. Schóól atkkilóón ebwe yááyá falúw ngáli Hotel and Golf Complex. Ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge fááigh ráágh fengál me aláálááyi ngáli seigh me limoow ráágh fengál me átirowal Sou Alléghl (Legislature) llól angúúngú fengál me P.L 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).Ppwommwol atkkilóón ghal ráágh atol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón yeel nge e lo reel percentage of the appraised fair market value reel falúw fengál me application percentage of Gross Receipts llól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

v. Pappidil ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge emmwel ubwe bweibwogh me reel Bwualsiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor me De'Ana Commercial Building, me Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta; me 1st floor me PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwal yoor pappid emmwel ubwe amwuri online me www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh siiwelil ppwommw reel atkkilóónol faluweer toulap iye e lo Unai Dangkulu, Seipél.

vii. Sekkretóóriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re bweibwogh ischil kkapas, views, angiingi ngare siiwelil ppwommw sángi schóó kka re mwuschel wóól ngare mmwalil Febreero 12, 2024, me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap iye e lo Seipél, Luuta ngare Tchiliyól. Rebwe ayoora arongorongol toulap ngare re tingór atol mille comment period.

Nation

Senate GOP blocks bipartisan border package

WASHINGTON (AP)—Wartime aid for Ukraine was left hanging in the Senate Wednesday after Republicans blocked a bipartisan border package that had been tied to the funding, then struggled to coalesce around a plan to salvage the aid for Kyiv.

After GOP senators scuttled months of negotiations with Democrats on legislation intended to cut back record numbers of illegal border crossings, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer tried to push ahead to a crucial test vote on a $95 billion package for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies—a modified package with the border portion stripped out.

But a deeply divided Republican conference was scrambling to find support for the wartime funding, even though it has been a top priority for Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell. It was the latest sign of the longtime Republican leader's slipping control over his conference and underscored how the traditional GOP tenet of robust foreign involvement is giving way to Donald Trump's "America First" nationalism. At stake is the future of Ukraine's defense against Russia.

» Then scrambles to find support for Ukraine aid

The Senate floor settled into an hours-long stall Wednesday night as Republicans huddled to see if they could gain the votes necessary to push it through the chamber. Schumer then closed the floor, saying he would "give our Republican colleagues the night to figure themselves out" ahead of a crucial test vote Thursday.

Republicans planned to meet in the morning to plot a path forward.

Some GOP senators have grown skeptical of sending money to Ukraine in its war with Russia, but Schumer warned earlier Wednesday that "history will cast a permanent and shameful shadow" on those who attempt to block it.

"Will the Senate stand up to brutish thugs like Vladimir Putin and reassure our friends abroad that America will never abandon them in the hour of need?" Schumer asked as he opened the Senate.

The roughly $60 billion in Ukraine aid has been stalled in Congress for months because of growing opposition from hardline conservatives in the House and Senate who criticize it as wasteful and demand an exit strategy for the war.

"We still need to secure America's borders before sending another dime overseas," Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah wrote in a post on X.

The impasse means that the U.S. has halted arms shipments to Kyiv at a crucial point in the nearly two-year-old conflict, leaving Ukrainian soldiers without ample ammunition and missiles as Russian President Putin has mounted relentless attacks.

Ukraine's cause still enjoys support from many Senate Republicans, including McConnell, but the question vexing lawmakers has always been how to craft a package that could clear the Republican-controlled House.

A pairing of border policies and aid for allies—first proposed by Republicans—was intended to help squeeze the package through the House, where archconservatives hold control. But GOP senators—some within minutes of the bill's release Sunday—rejected the compromise as election-year politics set in.

Many Republicans said the compromise wasn't enough and they would rather allow the issue be decided in the presidential election. Supporters of the bill insisted it represented the most comprehensive bipartisan border proposal in years and included many Republican priorities.

The vote failed 49-50—far short of the 60 ayes needed to take up the bill—with four Republicans voting to move forward with the legislation and six Democrats, some of whom said the border compromise went too far, voting against it.

Mexico overtakes China as leading source of goods imported by the US

WASHINGTON (AP)—For the first time in more than two decades, Mexico last year surpassed China as the leading source of goods imported by the United States. The shift reflects the growing tensions between Washington and Beijing as well as U.S. efforts to import from countries that are friendlier and closer to home.

Figures released Wednesday by the U.S. Commerce Department show that the value of goods imported by the United States from Mexico rose nearly 5% from 2022 to 2023, to more than $475 billion. At the same time, the value of Chinese imports imports tumbled 20% to $427 billion.

The last time that Mexican goods imported by the United States exceeded the value of China's imports was in 2002.

Economic relations between the United States and China have severely deteriorated in recent years as Beijing has fought aggressively on trade and made ominous military gestures in the Far East.

The Trump administration began imposing tariffs on Chinese imports in 2018, arguing that Beijing's trade practices violated global trade rules. President Joe Biden retained those tariffs after taking office in 2021, making clear that antagonism toward China would be a rare area of common ground for Democrats and Republicans.

As an alternative to offshoring production to China, which U.S. corporations had long engaged in, the Biden administration has urged companies to seek suppliers in allied countries ("friend-shoring") or to return manufacturing to the United States ("reshoring"). Supply-chain disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic also led U.S. companies to seek supplies closer to the United States ("near-shoring").

Mexico has been among the beneficiaries of the growing shift away from reliance on Chinese factories. But the picture is more complicated than it might seem. Some Chinese manufacturers have established factories in Mexico to exploit the benefits of the 3-year-old U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement, which allows for duty-free trade in North America for many products.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said this week that the trade status gives Mexico new leverage, saying it would make it hard for the U.S. to close the two countries' border to limit immigration, as suggested in negotiations on a border bill in the U.S. Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400036

SUBMISSION DATE: March 08, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Rehabilitation of Roll Off Container Bay Dumpster"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after February 09, 2024 at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of pay-ment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on February 27, 2024, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base,** Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on March 01, 2024 to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division,** 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 • Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315 • www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
As of February 09, 2024

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

NO.	APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1.	Saipan Sunset Cruise, Inc. dba Jade Lady III	01/19/2024 SLRm-2024-023	In-Water Maintenance	Garapan, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 02/01/2024
2.	Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)	01/25/2024 SSm-2023-009-A1	Additional Scope at Micro Beach Road & Royal Palm Avenue (Garapan Sewer Mains & Manholes Replacement)	Garapan, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved 01/31/2024
3.	Canaan Realty, LLC	01/26/2024 Supplemental SMS-2023-102	Construction of 42 Units Housing Project	As Lito, Saipan	Major Siting	Supplemental Under Review*
4.	Jijing A. Borja dba Jimmy Tour Adventure	02/06/2024 SLR-2024-026	Commercial Snorkeling Activities	Laolao, Obyan, Oleai, Wing Crevasse & Grotto, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Application Under Review*
5.	Rota Mayor's Office	01/23/2024 RPIm-2024-001	Semi Concrete Pavilions	Easter Harbor, Rota	Ports & Industrial	Application Under Review*
6.	The Micronesian Telecommunications Corporation dba IT&E	02/05/2024 RSWMPICm-2024-002	Micro Trenching	Island-Wide, Rota	Shoreline, Wetlands & Mangroves, Ports & Industrial, Coastal Hazards	Application Under Review*
7.	The Micronesian Telecommunications Corporation dba IT&E	02/05/2024 TSWPICH-2024-003	Fiber Optic, Copper Installation & Connection – Existing Telephone Cable Repairs & Replacement	Island-Wide, Tinian	Shoreline, Wetlands & Mangroves, Ports & Industrial, Coastal Hazards	Application Under Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

World

Blinken: Hamas-Israel deal is still possible

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)—U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that a cease-fire and hostage-release agreement between Israel and Hamas was still possible, despite the two sides being far apart on the central terms for a deal.

» Even though sides remain far apart

Blinken was in the region trying to broker an arrangement that could bring some respite in Israel's war against Hamas, which is entering its fifth month after killing more than 27,000 Palestinians, displacing much of the territory's population and sparking a humanitarian catastrophe.

Those diplomatic efforts were rattled earlier in the day when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a detailed, three-phase plan by Hamas that would unfold over 4 1/2 months. The plan stipulated that all hostages would be released in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, including senior militants, and an end to the war.

Netanyahu, who called Hamas' plan "delusional," dismissed any proposal that leaves the militant group in full or partial control of Gaza. Netanyahu said military pressure was the best way to free the roughly 100 hostages held in the Gaza Strip, where they were taken after Hamas' cross-border rampage into southern Israel on Oct. 7, which sparked the war.

Israel has made destroying Hamas' governing and military abilities one of its wartime objectives, and Hamas' proposal would effectively leave it in power in Gaza and allow it to rebuild its military capabilities.

But Blinken downplayed the posturing, saying it was part of the arduous negotiating process. "It's not flipping a light switch. It's not yes or no," he said.

"While there are some clear non-starters in Hamas' response, we do think it creates space for agreement to be reached, and we will work at that relentlessly until we get there," he said.

Blinken is trying to advance the cease-fire talks while pushing for a larger postwar settlement in which Saudi Arabia would normalize relations with Israel in return for a "clear, credible, time-bound path to the establishment of a Palestinian state."

But the increasingly unpopular Netanyahu is opposed to Palestinian statehood, and his hawkish governing coalition could collapse if he is seen as making too many concessions.

Hamas' statements came in response to a proposal drawn up by the United States, Israel, Qatar and Egypt. The militants' reply was published in Lebanon's Al-Akhbar newspaper, which is close to the powerful Hezbollah militant group.

A Hamas official and two Egyptian officials confirmed its authenticity. A fourth official familiar with the talks later clarified the sequencing of the releases. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media on the negotiations.

In the first 45-day phase, Hamas would release all remaining women and children, as well as older and sick men, in exchange for an unspecified number of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. Israel would also withdraw from populated areas, cease aerial operations, allow far more aid to enter and permit Palestinians to return to their homes, including in devastated northern Gaza.

The second phase, to be negotiated during the first, would include the release of all remaining hostages, mostly soldiers, in exchange for all Palestinian detainees over the age of 50, including senior militants.

Israel would release an additional 1,500 prisoners, 500 of whom would be specified by Hamas, and complete its withdrawal from Gaza.

In the third phase, the sides would exchange the remains of hostages and prisoners.

At the news conference earlier, Netanyahu rejected Hamas' demands, saying they would lead to a disaster for Israel.

"Surrendering to Hamas' delusional demands that we heard now not only won't lead to freeing the captives, it will just invite another massacre," Netanyahu said in a nationally televised evening news conference.

Netanyahu said the Israeli military had achieved many of the goals it set out and that victory was "a matter of months" away.

He said forces had dismantled 18 of Hamas' 24 battalions, destroyed tunnels and killed militants, and that military pressure on Hamas was the best way to bring about the release of the hostages. He said preparations were underway for the military to move into the southern Gaza border town of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have crammed to flee the fighting.

US drone strike in Baghdad kills high-ranking militia leader linked to attacks on US troops

BAGHDAD (AP)—A U.S. drone strike blew up a car in the Iraqi capital Wednesday night, killing a high-ranking commander of the powerful Kataib Hezbollah militia who is responsible for "directly planning and participating in attacks" on American troops in the region, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

The precision blast hit a main thoroughfare in the Mashtal neighborhood in eastern Baghdad, attracting a crowd as emergency teams picked through the wreckage. It came amid roiling tensions in the region, and will likely further anger Iraqi government leaders, who U.S. officials said were not notified in advance of the strike.

Security forces closed off the heavily guarded Green Zone, where a number of diplomatic compounds are located, and there were concerns about social media postings urging protesters to storm the U.S. embassy.

There were conflicting reports on the number of those killed, with U.S. officials saying the initial assessment was one, and saying there were no civilians hurt or killed. But two officials with Iran-backed militias in Iraq said that three died, including Wissam Muhammad Sabir Al-Saadi, known as Abu Baqir Al-Saadi, the commander in charge of Kataib Hezbollah's operations in Syria. Kataeb Hezbollah later announced his death "following the bombing of the American occupation forces" in a statement.

Those officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to journalists.

In a statement, U.S. Central Command said "there are no indications of collateral damage or civilian casualties at this time." It added that the U.S. "will not hesitate to hold responsible all those who threaten our forces' safety."

The strike—which came at 9:30 p.m. local time—is certain to inflame already seething relations between Washington and Baghdad. It comes just days after the U.S. military launched an air assault on dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in retaliation for a drone strike that killed three U.S. troops and injured more than 40 others at a base in Jordan in late January.

WORLD BRIEFS

Bombings at Pakistani political offices kill at least 30 a day before parliamentary elections

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—Bombs ripped through two separate political offices in southwestern Pakistan on Wednesday, killing at least 30 people, officials said, a day before the country was set to elect a new parliament. The attacks in Baluchistan province—home to a low-level insurgency and various militant groups—have raised concerns ahead of the balloting in the troubled Western ally where many voters are already disillusioned by political feuding and a seemingly intractable economic crisis. Violence ahead of elections and on the day of polling is common in Pakistan, which has struggled to rein in militancy. Tens of thousands of police and paramilitary forces have been deployed across the country following a recent surge in attacks, especially in Baluchistan. Hours later, the Islamic State group's branch in Pakistan claimed Wednesday's second attack. At least 18 people were killed in the first attack at independent candidate Asfandyar Khan's election office in the Pashin district, Jumadad Mandokhel, a government official, said. Shortly after, another bombing killed at least 12 people at the Jamiat Ulema Islam party office in Qilla Saifullah, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) away, according to Jan Achakzai, the spokesman for the provincial government. He said the elections would not be delayed despite the bombings. The attacks, which left more than two dozen people wounded, drew condemnation from almost all political parties.

Death toll from Chile's wildfires reaches 131, and more than 300 people are missing

VIÑA DEL MAR, Chile (AP)—The death toll from wildfires that ravaged central Chile for several days increased to 131 on Tuesday, and more than 300 people were still missing as the blazes appeared to be burning themselves out. The fires in Valparaiso are said to be Chile's deadliest disaster since an earthquake in 2010. Officials have suggested that some could have been intentionally set. President Gabriel Boric during a visit to the region announced that furniture used for the 2023 Pan American Games will be donated to victims. He said the government also will forgive the water bills for 9,200 affected homes. The fires began Friday on the mountainous eastern edge of Viña del Mar, a beach resort known for a festival that attracts the best in Latin music. Two other towns, Quilpé and Villa Alemana, also were hit hard as the fires spread quickly in dry weather and strong winds. The Viña del Mar Festival canceled its opening gala as a sign of mourning. Many participating singers including Alejandro Sanz, Pablo Alborán and Maná sent messages of solidarity and announced donations. Chile's Forensic Medical Service has said many bodies recovered from the fires were in bad condition and difficult to identify, but forensic workers would take samples of genetic material from people reporting missing relatives

In Loving Memory of

†Wilson Sumor Nicholas

Born on August 19, 1970 and called to his everlasting life on February 3, 2024, at the age of 53.

†Wilson will be greeted and reunited with his:

Step-Father:	†Steven Patris
Brother:	†Raynold Aquino
Mother-in-law:	†Akieko Ruben
Sister-in-law:	†Zina Atinisom
Brother-in-law:	†Frank O. Tagabuel
Grandchild:	†Felicity Marie I. Tagabuel

His memories will live in the hearts of his:

Wife: Norentine Atinisom Nicholas

Children: Saula Andrew/Kerwin Ngiraremiang (Kasey & Kerissla), Mollie Atinisom (Akieko Jade), Adriana A./Walter Paulus (Austen Tate, Vanity Jace), Wanda Nicholas (Oscar Benham & Gilbert Jr.), Wendy Nicholas/Bryton Atalig (Neriah Faith), Wilson Jr. Nicholas, John Henry I./Michelle Tagabuel (Danika, Dezerae, Diandra, John Henry II), Norma T./Crispino Rapugpai (Destini, Armani, Kilivani), Lauria T./Vic Peter Duenas (Katelynn, Frankie, Liansy, Veronica, Wikole, & Valeria), Bill John/Carmen Tagabuel (Arsyni, Bill John Jr., Simion, & Francisco), Karen Tagabuel/Rowino Eseliugoan (Duclan), Jordan A./Naomi Tagabuel (Frank Ratigmwai)

Mother: Hermana Sumor Father: Nicholas Aquino

Siblings: Ricky Faustino/Aritha Jack and Family, Doralinda Selbart, Philomena Kalisto & Family, Arnold/Ayano Frano & Family, Jay/Bianca Elias & Family, Francisco Xavier/Wendy Antonio & Family, Eunice Frano & Family, Stephanie Patris/Severiano Lorenzo & Family, Alexandrina P./Joesan Andon & Family, Alexandra Patris & Family, Stevick Patris & Family, Junior Aquino/Pasquana Tirsl & Family, Christian Aquino/Stella Patris & Family, Delilah Aquino/Re Zamora & Family

Brothers and Sisters In-Law: Alice Atinisom, Nutsy Tagabuel, Norenta Alfonso, Lorenzo Atinisom, Late Atinisom/Nieves Romolor, Netni/Rasau Martin, and Lingko A./Alex Laniyo

Our beloved †Wilson will also be missed by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces,nephews, and friends.

Daily rosary is being said at the Nicholas Residence in Kagman I at 7:30 PM.

Funeral mass will be held on Monday, February 12, 2024 at Santa Soledad, Kagman at 1:00 PM.
Viewing will be done at the Nicholas Residence in Kagman I.

Thank you – Kinisou – Kom Mal Mesulang

Norentine A. Nicholas, Children & Family

Off The Wall

Inert Cold War-era missile is found in garage of WA home

AP

This image provided by Bellevue, Wash. Police Department shows a an inert rocket in the garage of a home in Bellevue, Wash, on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024.

BELLEVUE, Wash. (AP)—An inert rocket of the type used to carry a nuclear warhead has been found in the garage of a home of a deceased resident in Washington state, police said.

Bellevue police responded Thursday to a report of a military-grade rocket in the garage of a home in the city across Lake Washington from Seattle. Police said an Air Force museum in Dayton, Ohio, had called Wednesday evening to report an offer to donate the item, which a neighbor said had been purchased at an estate sale.

Bomb squad members inspected the rusting object and found it was a Douglas AIR-2 Genie (previous designation MB-1), an unguided air-to-air rocket that is designed to carry a 1.5 kt W25 nuclear warhead. There was no warhead attached and there was no rocket fuel—"essentially meaning that the item was an artifact with no explosive hazard."

"Because the item was inert and the military did not request it back, police left the item with the neighbor to be restored for display in a museum," police said.

According to the Air Force Armament Museum Foundation, the unguided air-to-air rocket was used by the U.S. and Canada during a period of the Cold War when interception of Soviet strategic bombers was a major military concern. In July 1957, a Genie was launched at 18,000 feet (about 5,500 meters) from an F89J interceptor and detonated over Yucca Flats, Nevada, the first and only test detonation of a U.S. nuclear-tipped air-to-air rocket.

"And we think it's gonna be a long, long time before we get another call like this again," police said on Twitter, adding a rocket emoji.

Sauna patrons dressed only in towels pull two from car that plunged into a Norwegian fjord

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Not all heroes wear capes. Some don't wear anything at all.

With only towels around their waists, patrons aboard a floating sauna in a Norwegian fjord rescued two people whose car had plunged into the water.

The car appeared to have driven off the quay on Thursday at the Akershusstranda, an area where ships dock at the foot of the Norwegian capital Oslo's picturesque medieval fortress and castle.

A witness told the Norwegian VG newspaper that he saw the car stopped, before it suddenly accelerated and ended up in the water. The paper reported that the driver had thought the vehicle was in park when he hit the accelerator pedal.

As the car went down, the two occupants escaped and were on the roof of the vehicle as the sauna raft headed toward them.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Suspected Chinese spy pigeon cleared after 8 months

NEW DELHI (AP)—Indian police cleared a suspected Chinese spy pigeon after eight months' detention and released it into the wild Tuesday, news agency Press Trust of India reported. The pigeon's ordeal began in May when it was captured near a port in Mumbai with two rings tied to its legs, carrying words that looked like Chinese. Police suspected it was involved in espionage and took it in, later sending it to Mumbai's Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals. Eventually, it turned out the pigeon was an open-water racing bird from Taiwan that had escaped and made its way to India. With police permission, the bird was transferred to the Bombay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, whose doctors set it free on Tuesday.

Woman tossing trash falls into dumpster, survives getting compacted in garbage truck

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—A woman fell into a dumpster while throwing out her garbage and was later rescued from a trash truck that had compacted the contents while she was inside, fire department officials in New Hampshire said. Luckily, neighbors heard her screams and the trash compartment was equipped with a camera. The driver spotted the woman stuck inside and called 911. By then, the driver "had reportedly compacted the garbage up to four times," the Manchester Fire Department said in a news release. Rescuers used a basket ladder to reach the top of the truck and lift her out. By then, she was "standing/talking/yelling, but was not alert enough to answer questions," the news release said. The woman was taken to a hospital after Monday's misadventure. Her name was not released. "In 32 years, I've never seen anything like this my whole career," Battalion Chief Bob Beaudet told WMUR-TV. "It's alarming, because you don't really think it's true."

Science & Technology

Meta says it will label all AI-generated images on FB, IG

By MATT O'BRIEN
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Facebook and Instagram users will start seeing labels on AI-generated images that appear on their social media feeds, part of a broader tech industry initiative to sort between what's real and not.

Meta said Tuesday it's working with industry partners on technical standards that will make it easier to identify images and eventually video and audio generated by artificial intelligence tools.

What remains to be seen is how well it will work at a time when it's easier than ever to make and distribute AI-generated imagery that can cause harm—from election misinformation to nonconsensual fake nudes of celebrities.

"It's kind of a signal that they're taking seriously the fact that generation of fake content online is an issue for their platforms," said Gili Vidan, an assistant professor of information science at Cornell University. It could be "quite effective" in flagging a large portion of AI-generated content made with commercial tools, but it won't likely catch everything, she said.

Meta's president of global affairs, Nick Clegg, didn't specify Tuesday when the labels would appear but said it will be "in the coming months" and in different languages, noting that a "number of important elections are taking place around the world."

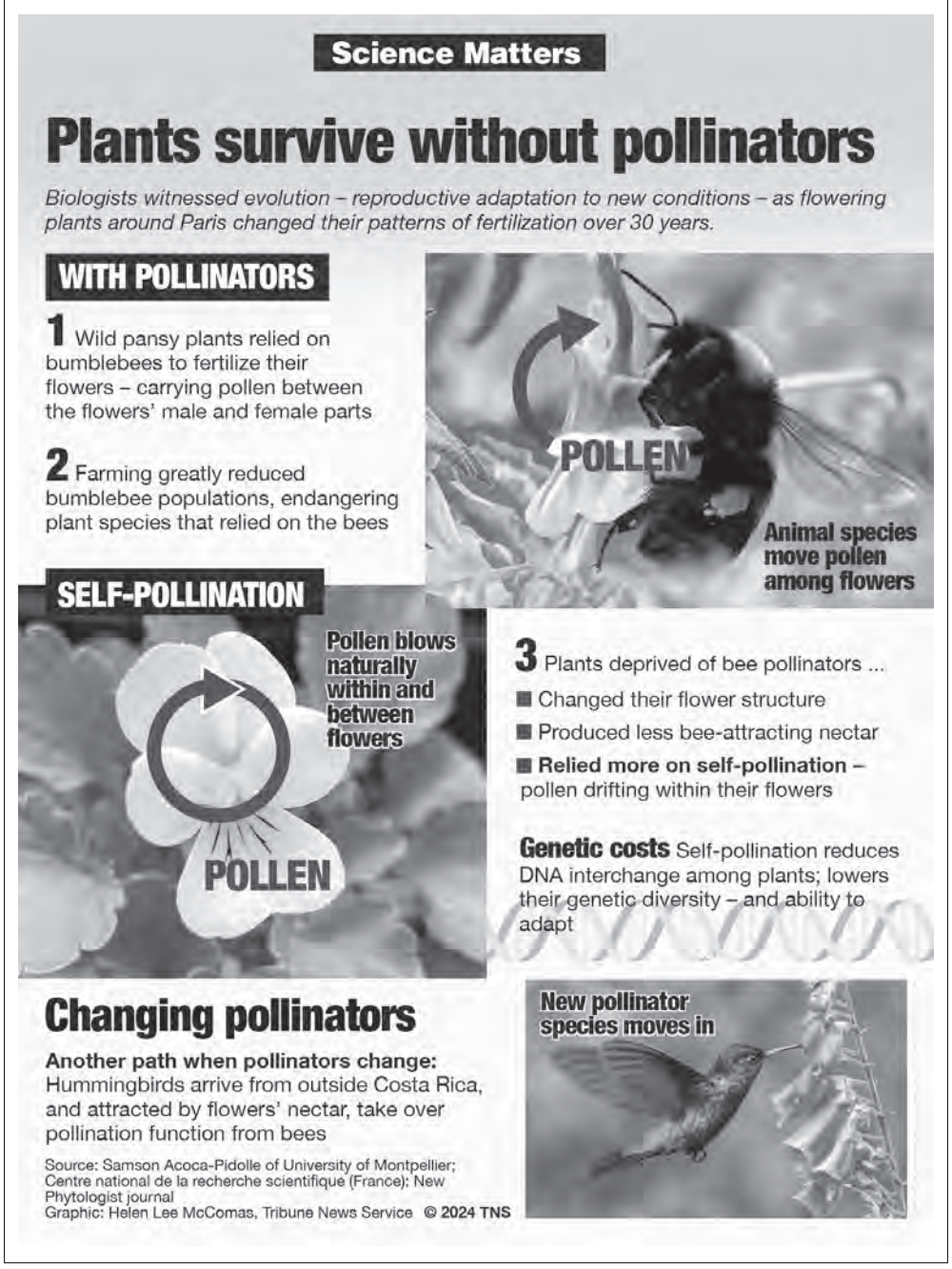
Ocean sponges suggest Earth warmed longer, more than thought; some scientists dubious

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP SCIENCE WRITER

A handful of centuries-old sponges from deep in the Caribbean are causing some scientists to think human-caused climate change began sooner and has heated the world more than they thought.

They calculate that the world has already gone past the internationally approved target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since preindustrial times, hitting 1.7 degrees (3.1 degrees Fahrenheit) as of 2020. They analyzed six of the long-lived sponges—simple animals that filter water—for growth records that document changes in water temperature, acidity and carbon dioxide levels in the air, according to a study in Monday's journal Nature Climate Change.

Other scientists were skeptical of the study's claim that the world has warmed that much more than thought. But if the sponge calculations are right, there are big repercussions, the study authors said.


Science Matters
Plants survive without pollinators
Biologists witnessed evolution – reproductive adaptation to new conditions – as flowering plants around Paris changed their patterns of fertilization over 30 years.
WITH POLLINATORS
1 Wild pansy plants relied on bumblebees to fertilize their flowers – carrying pollen between the flowers' male and female parts
2 Farming greatly reduced bumblebee populations, endangering plant species that relied on the bees
POLLEN
Animal species move pollen among flowers
SELF-POLLINATION
Pollen blows naturally within and between flowers
POLLEN
3 Plants deprived of bee pollinators ...
Changed their flower structure
Produced less bee-attracting nectar
Relied more on self-pollination – pollen drifting within their flowers
Genetic costs Self-pollination reduces DNA interchange among plants; lowers their genetic diversity – and ability to adapt
Changing pollinators
Another path when pollinators change: Hummingbirds arrive from outside Costa Rica, and attracted by flowers' nectar, take over pollination function from bees
New pollinator species moves in
Source: Samson Acoca-Pidolle of University of Montpellier; Centre national de la recherche scientifique (France): New Phytologist journal
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service © 2024 TNS

Life & Style

Taylor Swift is demanding that student stop tracking her private jet

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—When it comes to dealing with a Florida college student who uses public data and social media to track the private jets of billionaires, politicians and other celebrities, Taylor Swift apparently can't just shake it off.

Swift

In late December, Swift's camp hit Jack Sweeney, a junior studying information technology at the University of Central Florida, with a cease-and-desist letter that blames his automated tracking of her private jet for tipping off stalkers as to her location. In the letter, attorneys from the law firm Venable accuse Sweeney of effectively providing "individuals intent on harming her, or with nefarious or violent intentions, a roadmap to carry out their plans."

Sweeney provided the link to that letter in an email to The Associated Press. In that message, he emphasized that while he has never intended to cause harm, he also believes strongly in the importance of transparency and public information.

"One should reasonably expect that their jet will be tracked, whether or not I'm the one doing it, as it is public information after all," he wrote.

A spokesperson for Swift echoed the legal complaint, saying that "the timing of stalkers" suggests a connection to Sweeney's flight-tracking sites. The spokesperson did not respond to questions seeking elaboration of that charge, such as whether stalkers have been seen waiting for Swift at the airport when her plane arrived or, alternatively, if there is evidence that stalkers have somehow inferred Swift's subsequent location from the arrival time of her flight.

Prince William thanks public for messages to King Charles and Kate

LONDON (AP)—Prince William returned to royal duties Wednesday for the first time since his father, King Charles III, announced his cancer diagnosis and his wife, Kate, was hospitalized for abdominal surgery.

Speaking about his families' health scares in public for the first time, the 41-year-old heir to the throne thanked the public for their "kind messages of support" at a charity gala dinner. Earlier in the day, he performed an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you for the kind messages of support for Catherine and for my father, especially in recent days," William told the gala dinner for London's Air Ambulance Charity. "It means a great deal to us all."

"It's fair to say the past few weeks have had a rather medical focus, so I thought I'd come to an air ambulance function to get away from it all," he added jokingly.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Taylor Swift's 'The Eras Tour' is heading to Disney+ with 5 new songs added

NEW YORK (AP)—Taylor Swift's blockbuster concert film "The Eras Tour" will make its streaming debut on Disney+, the Walt Disney Co. announced Wednesday. The film, now titled "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour (Taylor's Version)" will land on the streaming platform March 15. Five new songs will be included with the film, including "Cardigan." "'The Eras Tour' has been a true phenomenon that has and continues to thrill fans around the world, and we are very excited to bring this electrifying concert to audiences wherever they are, exclusively on Disney+," said Bob Iger, Disney chief executive, in a statement. "The Eras Tour" amassed more than $262 million worldwide in theaters after opening in October, setting a record for concert films. Swift partnered with AMC Theaters for the release in a first-of-its-kind deal that cut out Hollywood studios and instead sent the film directly into theaters. That left a second round of bidding for streaming rights. "The Eras Tour" film will hit Disney+ about a month before Swift's recently announced new album, "The Tortured Poets Department," drops on April 19. On Sunday, she won best album at the Grammys for "Midnights."

'Moana 2' is coming to theaters for a Thanksgiving release

Moana and Maui are sailing back to the big screen, very quickly. "Moana 2" is coming to theaters in November, Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Iger said Wednesday. Originally planned as a television series, the movie finds Moana journeying on a dangerous mission to the far seas of Oceania after getting a call from her ancestors. It is, the company said, "an adventure unlike anything she's ever faced." "Moana remains an incredibly popular franchise and we can't wait to give you more of Moana and Maui," Iger said in a statement. The film will open in theaters on Nov. 27. "Moana 2" was directed by Dave Derrick Jr. and will feature music by Grammy winners Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, Mark Mancina, and Grammy nominee Opetaia Foa'i. No details were given about the voice actors. ***(AP)***

Netflix to create shows on 2004 and 2024 Boston Red Sox

NEW YORK (AP)—The Boston Red Sox will be the focus of a pair of new Netflix shows. The streaming service will follow the team through the 2024 season and present a documentary series in 2025 that will be produced and directed by Greg Whiteley of One Potato Productions. Netflix said Wednesday it will have "unprecedented access to players, coaches and executives throughout the 2024 season." Netflix intends to air a documentary this year focusing on the 2004 Red Sox, who broke the so-called Curse of the Bambino and won the team's first World Series title since 1918. That will be directed by Colin Barnicle, a son of former Boston Globe and Herald columnist Mike Barnicle, and produced by Meadowlark Media, founded by former ESPN president John Skipper.

Christian Bale breaks ground on foster homes he's fought for 16 years to see built

PALMDALE, Calif. (AP)—Christian Bale broke ground Wednesday on a project he's been pursuing for 16 years — the building of a dozen homes and a community center in Los Angeles County intended to keep siblings in foster care together. The Oscar winner stood with a grin and a shovel full of dirt alongside local politicians and donors in the decidedly non-Hollywood city of Palmdale, 60 miles (80 kilometers) north and across the San Gabriel Mountains from Los Angeles. But Bale, who was Batman in director Christopher Nolan 's "Dark Knight" trilogy, wasn't just playing Bruce Wayne and lending his name and money to a charitable cause. The project was his brainchild and one he's long lent his labor to, getting his hands dirty and on Wednesday standing in actual mud after a historic storm on a hard-won site he'd visited many times before.

Russia says former Fox News host Tucker Carlson has interviewed Vladimir Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been interviewed by former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, the Kremlin confirmed Wednesday. It is Putin's first interview to a Western media figure since his full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago. Carlson had released a video from Moscow on Tuesday in which he said he would be interviewing Putin. Carlson claimed that Western journalists had interviewed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy multiple times but could not be "bothered" to interview the Russian president. The interview will be posted Thursday, according to Justin Wells, head of programming at Carlson's streaming network. It's not known what was said in the interview. Putin has heavily limited his contact with international media since he launched the war in Ukraine in February 2022. Russian authorities have cracked down on media, forcing some independent Russian outlets to close, blocking others and ordering a number of foreign reporters to leave the country. ***(AP)***

Fiance's demanding mom puts a crimp in relationship

DEAR ABBY: I love my fiance, but his mother says, "Over my dead body will he move away from me." She has cancer and we have both been praying that she goes peacefully, but it seems all she wants to do is create as much strife as possible between my fiance and me. I am now ignoring calls and texts from her. Any advice as to how to deal with my fiance? He gets mean after three days at her house, fetching water, coffee and food (she IS capable). Please help me reframe this so I can be nicer to a hateful woman.

TRYING HARD IN THE SOUTH

DEAR TRYING HARD: What is your fiance's mother's prognosis? Not everyone being treated for cancer dies of the disease. Does SHE think she's terminal? If that's the case, she may have said what she did because she's frightened and in pain. You state that she is "capable" of taking care of herself, but some of the treatments she may be receiving have been known to leave patients feeling tired and weak. Because helping his mother leaves your fiance on edge ("mean"), have you considered sharing the responsibility and giving him a break? And one final thought: If he's mean now, what does that bode for your own future with him?

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A dear friend of many years has developed a cellphone addiction that's driving me crazy—insisting on showing me funny videos, memes or camera filters when we visit. I respond either with disinterest or a polite "I'm here to visit with you, not look at your phone." Some of her other behaviors are downright rude. She often shows up late, and I can clearly see she's been making frivolous social media posts while I'm waiting. On a group road trip, she will silently play a phone game, excluding herself from the fun. I know this affects her job, too, and I have tried advising her along that vein, but nothing changes. Is this a sign of a friendship growing apart or moving toward different interests? Or am I just a cranky Luddite who needs to accept the new reality?

LOW-PRIORITY FRIEND

DEAR FRIEND: The person you are describing isn't so much hooked on her phone as she appears to be hooked on herself. Keeping people waiting while posting to social media is rude, and recognizing it as such isn't being "cranky." I agree with you that the behaviors she's exhibiting are symptoms of diverging interests. You may be less offended if you see less of her.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Is it ever too late to report abuse? I've spent years dealing with the emotional pain my now ex-husband caused me, but I never made a formal report. Lately he has been trying to get in touch, and I'm afraid. Last time, he almost caused me to lose my life. Should I file a police report or not?

AFRAID IN OREGON

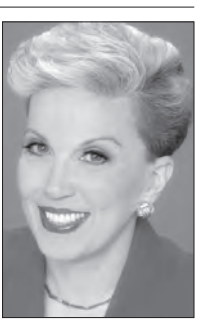
DEAR AFRAID: If you feel your ex-husband is a danger to you, contact the police and tell them you are afraid and why. Put the local authorities on notice, let them tell you how you can protect yourself, and follow through.

■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

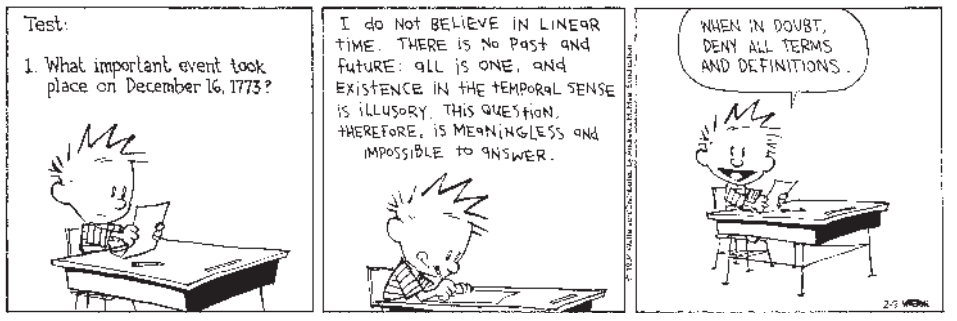


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


Test:
1. What important event took place on December 16, 1773?
I do Not BELIEVE IN LINEAR time. THERE is No Past and future: all is ONE, and EXISTENCE IN THE TEMPORAL SENSE is illusory. This QUESTion, THEREFORE, is MEANINGLESS and IMPOSSIBLE to ANSWER.
WHEN IN DOUBT, DENY ALL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

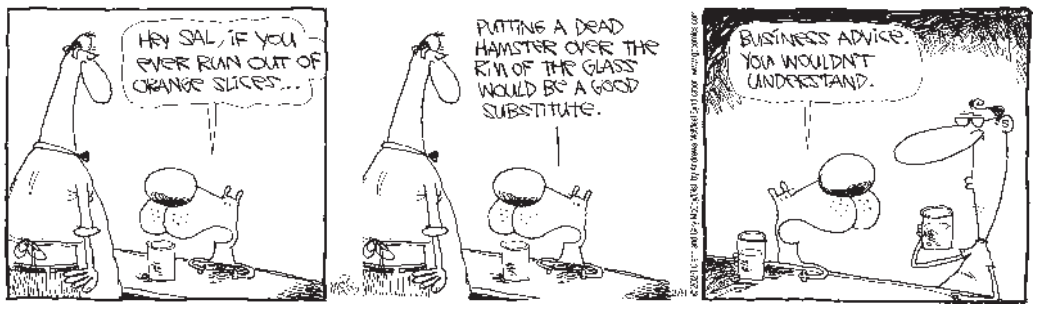
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

YOU GOOD?
I'M GREAT!
I READ ALL KINDS OF BOOKS THIS WEEK. HUMOR. HORROR. ROMANCE. TRUE CRIME.
NOW, WATCH. THE LITTLE GREMLINS IN MY BRAIN'LL START MAKING CREATIVITY OUT OF THAT STEW.
YOU HAVE STEW GREMLINS IN YOUR BRAIN?
I HOPE SO. SOMETIMES THEY TAKE THE WEEK OFF.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


HEY SAL, IF YOU EVER RUN OUT OF ORANGE SLICES...
PUTTING A DEAD HAMSTER OVER THE RIM OF THE GLASS WOULD BE A GOOD SUBSTITUTE.
BUSINESS ADVICE. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 In check
6 Pitch
9 Talk on and on
12 Tickle
13 Census stat
14 Mauna —
15 Prepares flour
16 Cushions
18 Closing number
20 Overdue
21 Conk out
23 Mined-over matter
24 Moon-related
25 Literary reps
27 Bygone anesthetic
29 Musical mixture
31 Inflatable sleeper
35 Ritzy violin
37 Arizona city
38 Seize by force
41 Online address
43 Little lie
44 Gershwin's "The — Love"
45 Use a towel
47 Clown
49 Dumpster filler
52 Yalie
53 Dad on "Blackish"
54 "I cannot — lie"
55 Trio after Q
56 Listening device
57 Aromas

DOWN
1 Remote batteries, often
2 Texter's "Enough!"
3 Self-service meals
4 Italian wine region
5 Kind of question
6 iPad, for one
7 Flu symptom
8 Game official
9 Collect slowly
10 Heart line
11 Less noble
17 Light snowfall
19 Venezuelan corn patty
21 River blocker
22 Polish tennis star Swiatek
24 Island garland
26 Zhivago portrayer
28 Hirsute
30 Strike caller
32 City on Lake Erie
33 Brit. record label
34 Apply cream
36 Actress Kathleen
38 Brown shade
39 Author Bellow, et al.
40 Ill-suited
42 Gambling game
45 Nickelodeon's "Explorer"
46 Dancer Astaire
48 Verse by Neruda
50 Camera type
51 Possesses

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	L	O	P		C	O	B		C	H	E	T
T	I	M	E		A	N	O		A	C	N	E
A	L	A	R		T	O	T		N	U	D	E
I	A	R	M	A	C		H	U	D	S	O	N
			I	S	H		Z	O	F			
M	U	S	T		E	N	C	I	R	C	L	E
C	P	T			R	E	A			A	O	K
M	A	R	M	O	S	E	T		S	T	Y	E
		A	A	A			A	G	E			
T	R	Y	S	T	S		C	O	L	M	A	N
W	A	C	O		H	B	O		F	A	R	C
I	R	A	N		E	L	M		I	T	C	H
N	E	T	S		D	U	B		E	S	S	C

Yesterday's answer 2-9

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12					■	13			■	14		
15					■	16			17			
		18			19			■	20			
21	22		■	23			■	24				
25			26	■	27		28			■	■	■
29				30		■	31			32	33	34
			35			36		■	37			
38	39	40			■	41		42	■	43		
44				■	45				46		■	■
47				48			■	49			50	51
52			■	53				54				
55			■	56				57				

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tyson Houseman, 34; Mia Farrow, 79; Joe Pesci, 81; Carole King, 82.

Happy Birthday: Keep the momentum flowing. Take the initiative to stick to your pattern and budget. Trust and believe in yourself. Outside influences will tempt you to overstep your means, expand too quickly or take on too much. Grow with each step and the pieces will fall into place. Positive change is within reach if you nurture and protect what you deserve. Your numbers are 6, 13, 20, 27, 32, 37, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Your eagerness will allow someone to take advantage of you. Don't commit to taking on unfair responsibilities without getting what you want in return. Negotiate with as much passion as you put into a job well done. Protect against insult and injury. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Overthinking a situation will send mixed messages to others and cause you to make poor decisions. Let your instincts take over and put your energy into actions, not analysis. A change of heart will encourage you to plan something special for someone you love. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Don't make changes without researching or getting permission. The fallout from acting in haste will set you back. Be smart and approach projects by asking questions and preparing for the best outcome. Showing interest will help you gain respect and encourage enthusiasm. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: A creative project will turn out better than anticipated. Don't feel you have to overspend to make a statement. Say no to joint ventures and risky investments. Show how much you care about something through your actions. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Gravitate toward people, places and pastimes that inspire you to look and do your best. Partnerships will be complicated, and recognizing who makes you shine brightly will make it easier to accomplish your goals. Walk away from temptation. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Choose to do things differently. Allow yourself the freedom to experience something new. A change will spark your imagination and offer insight into how you can use your skills and talents to benefit you physically. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Expand your horizons and try something new and exciting. Challenge your intellect and share feelings and plans with someone you love. Consider the possibilities and create a financial plan to help you achieve your goals. Don't risk injury. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Put a plan in place and act. What you do will impact your life and relationships more than what you say. Make changes that add to your comfort and allow you to spend more time doing things you enjoy with people you love. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Don't join forces with someone who doesn't play fairly, exaggerates or misleads you. Reorganize your plans and eliminate what you can to lower your overhead and ease stress. A minimalist attitude will give you the freedom to live life your way. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Send a clear message to anyone in your way. Please don't wait until it's too late to make a move. It's up to you to initiate your plans. Actions will stand out and give those around you a fair warning that things are about to change. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Direct your energy where it will have the greatest impact. Imagine the possibilities and create a blueprint in your mind that will encourage you to take the necessary steps to reach your objective. Listen to your inner voice and protect yourself from temptation and criticism. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Pay attention to detail and stay on top of where your money goes. Check your balances, look for bargains and buy only what's necessary. Revisit how you feel about someone, attend a reunion or let someone special know how you feel. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are profound, optimistic and patient. You are conceptual and groundbreaking.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4		5	2			3	8	
	6							2
8		1				4	6	
1		8		3	5		7	6
	3	7	8		1			4
6	5		7					1
	8	2		9	4			
			6	7	3			

Difficulty: ★★★★ 2/9

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	7	3	6	2	9	4	8	1
4	2	8	5	3	1	9	6	7
6	1	9	8	7	4	5	2	3
7	4	6	2	5	8	3	1	9
8	5	2	9	1	3	7	4	6
9	3	1	4	6	7	8	5	2
2	6	7	3	8	5	1	9	4
1	9	5	7	4	6	2	3	8
3	8	4	1	9	2	6	7	5

Difficulty: ★★★ 2/8

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

A LUNAR NEW YEAR TOMORROW Solution: 5 letters

F	O	O	D	S	P	R	I	N	G	R	O	L	L	S
I	O	P	P	O	R	T	U	N	I	T	Y	O	U	E
N	F	R	R	A	D	N	E	L	A	C	N	C	M	M
A	F	S	T	I	H	T	W	O	R	G	C	E	B	P
N	E	T	E	U	C	C	A	K	E	E	Y	L	R	E
C	R	R	L	E	N	E	W	V	S	T	L	E	E	R
E	I	E	P	V	M	E	I	S	I	I	I	B	L	O
P	N	N	M	O	A	T	S	R	G	O	M	R	L	R
O	G	G	E	L	Y	E	Ⓔ	H	P	N	A	A	A	O
C	H	T	T	D	N	P	T	Ⓣ	L	O	F	T	N	T
S	S	H	N	I	S	S	E	Y	Ⓐ	A	W	E	T	S
O	A	A	P	O	N	O	G	A	R	Ⓓ	M	E	E	E
R	C	P	R	E	D	E	S	N	E	C	N	I	R	C
O	A	P	C	O	I	N	S	E	L	D	O	O	N	N
H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	T	I	R	O	H	T	U	A

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Ancestor, Animal, Authority, Cake, Calendar, Candy, Cash, Celebrate, Coins, Date, Dragon, Emperor, Family, Finance, Food, Fortune, Growth, Happiness, Holiday, Horoscope, Incense, Lantern, Lights, Longevity, Love, Noodles, Offering, Opportunity, Power, Prosperity, Red, Rice, Spring Rolls, Strength, Success, Temple, Umbrella, Wealth

Yesterday's Answer: Storms

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1** can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Cavs run NBA-best win streak to seven by beating Wizards

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 40 points, including 14 in the fourth quarter, and the Cleveland Cavaliers overcame an uneven performance for their 15th victory in 16 games, a 114-106 victory over the Washington Wizards on Wednesday night.

Evan Mobley added 22 points on 9-of-10 shooting to help the Cavaliers extend their current NBA-best win streak to seven games and move a game ahead of Milwaukee and New York in second place in the Eastern Conference.

Mitchell and Mobley also had eight rebounds apiece as Cleveland survived a game with nine ties and 17 lead changes against the Wizards, who are second-to-last in the East.

Kyle Kuzma scored 28 points for Washington, which closed a four-game homestand without a victory after winning two of its first three games under interim coach Brian Keefe.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell (45) shoots against Washington Wizards guard Tyus Jones (5) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Feb 7, 2024, in Washington

WARRIORS 127 76ERS 104

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Andrew Wiggins had 21 points and 10 rebounds and Jonathan Kuminga scored 18 points to lead Golden State past a Philadelphia team sagging without Joel Embiid.

Stephen Curry scored two points in the first half and finished with nine, just two games after he dropped 60 points on Atlanta. Klay Thompson scored 18 points in 28 minutes after he was benched the final seven minutes in Monday's win against Brooklyn.

With the NBA trade deadline set for Thursday, coach Steve Kerr said he didn't expect the Warriors to make a major move. The Warriors moved to 23-25 and are still stuck in 11th in the Western Conference—just outside a spot for the Western Conference play-in tournament.

Ricky Council IV scored 17 points for the 76ers, who may slog through the rest of the season with Embiid out significant time following knee surgery. Without Embiid, the 76ers are an ugly 4-12, and a team just two weeks ago that played like an East contender, now faces a play-in possibility.

PELICANS 117, CLIPPERS 106

LOS ANGELES (AP)—C.J. McCollum scored 13 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, Zion Williamson added 21 points and 10 assists, and New Orleans slowed Los Angeles' recent roll.

Brandon Ingram had 15 points and eight rebounds for the Pelicans, who opened a four-game road trip with their fourth consecutive victory to match their longest winning streak of the season. Herb Jones and Trey Murphy III added 13 points apiece.

James Harden scored 19 points and Norman Powell had 18 for the Clippers, whose four-game winning streak ended in their first game back from an impressive 6-1 road trip during which they moved to the top of the Western Conference standings. Los Angeles was playing its eighth game in 13 days, and New Orleans capitalized.

Kawhi Leonard scored 15 points and Paul George finished with seven after missing his first nine shots as Los Angeles lost for only the sixth time in 32 games since the start of December.

CELTICS 125, HAWKS 117

BOSTON (AP)—Kristaps Porzingis scored 31 points, Derrick White scored 12 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and Boston beat Atlanta.

Jayson Tatum finished with 20 points, nine rebounds and seven assists as the Celtics improved to 24-3 at home and won their seventh straight over the Hawks. Al Horford added 14 points with eight rebounds and eight assists and Jaylen Brown finished with 15 points.

Brown was the only Boston starter not to hit a 3-pointer as the Celtics went 17 for 49 from beyond the arc, making 9 of 16 in the fourth quarter to put away the pesky Hawks.

Saddiq Bey led Atlanta with 25 points. Trae Young had 20 points and 10 assists and Jalen Johnson and Onyeka Okongwu added 19 points apiece for the Hawks.

HEAT 116, SPURS 104

MIAMI (AP— Jimmy Butler recorded his first triple-double in more than two years, Tyler Herro led the way with 24 points and Miami pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat San Antonio.

Butler—whose most recent triple-double was Jan. 29, 2022—finished with 17 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for the Heat, who led by as many as 19 in the fourth. Bam Adebayo added 20 points for Miami.

Tre Jones and Devin Vassell each scored 19 points and Victor Wembanyana finished with 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Spurs. San Antonio started its day with a shootaround practice at a Miami Beach school, surprising the boys and girls varsity teams there by letting them watch the last few minutes.

Wembanyama got his 25th double-double of the season, by far the most among this season's rookie class—Oklahoma City's Chet Holmgren has 13 for No. 2 on the list—and the most by a first-year player since Deandre Ayton had 39 and Trae Young had 30 in the 2018-19 campaign.

PISTONS 133, KINGS 120

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Jaden Ivey scored a career-high 37 points and Detroit, playing without its two top scorers, stunned Sacramento.

Ivey added seven assists and six rebounds as Detroit (7-43) improved to 3-20 on the road this season.

Alec Burks had 25 points and seven rebounds off the bench, and Jalen Duren had 20 points, 15 rebounds and six assists.

The Pistons were without Cade Cunningham (left knee injury management) and Bojan Bogdanovic (left calf soreness), who both average more than 20 points per game.

Domantas Sabonis led Sacramento with 30 points and 12 rebounds for his 33rd consecutive double-double.

RAPTORS 123, HORNETS 117

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—RJ Barrett scored 23 points, Jakob Poeltl had two big plays in the final minute and Toronto overcame a career-high 45 points from Miles Bridges to hand Charlotte its ninth straight loss.

Scottie Barnes, who will play in his first All-Star Game after being chosen as an alternate, finished with 18 points for the Raptors. Immanuel Quickley also scored 18, and Poeltl finished had 12 points and 12 rebounds.

Bridges had an efficient night, topping his previous career high of 41 points set Monday night against the Los Angeles Lakers by shooting 17 of 27 from the field with six 3-pointers. He also had eight rebounds and seven assists.

Bridges is only the fourth Charlotte player to have back-to-back 40-point games, joining Glen Rice (twice), Kemba Walker and Terry Rozier.

Source: Pistons add Fontecchio from Jazz, deal Morris to Timberwolves before trade deadline

DETROIT (AP)—The rebuilding Detroit Pistons have dealt Monte Morris to the contending Minnesota Timberwolves and acquired Simone Fontecchio from the Utah Jazz, according to a person familiar with the deals on the eve of the NBA trade deadline.

Detroit acquired Shake Milton, Troy Brown and a second-round selection from Minnesota and sent a 2024 second-round pick to Utah in the transactions, according to a person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Wednesday because the trades had not been announced.

The Timberwolves are in a closely contested, four-team race for the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference, a surprising season for a franchise that hasn't won a playoff series in 20 years.

The league's stingiest defense has fueled their success, but despite plenty of firepower from All-Stars Anthony Edwards and Karl-Anthony Towns, the Wolves have been lagging on offense. Four times in their last 10 games, they've had a fourth-quarter lead of 10-plus points and lost.

Milton and Brown were offseason free agent signings, but on a deep team neither has been able to crack the rotation on a regular basis and averaged just four-plus points per game.

The 28-year-old Morris, who has averaged 10.5 points and four assists in his career that includes playoff experience, potentially gives Minnesota a much-needed boost off the bench.

Fontecchio adds a desperately needed outside shooter in Detroit, and the Jazz landed a second-round pick for a 28-year-old player with an expiring contract. Utah, which is in contention for the playoffs, signed Fontecchio to a two-year, $6.3 million contract in 2022.

Fontecchio, an Italian small forward, averaged nearly nine points and made 39.1% of his 3-pointers for the Jazz in 34 starts and 16 games as a reserve this season, his second in the NBA.

The Pistons, who have the NBA's worst record a year after losing a league-high 65 games, are expected to make more moves before Thursday's trade deadline.

Morris was acquired by the Pistons from Washington for a second-round pick last summer. They had relatively high hopes for Morris this season in a homecoming for the point guard from Flint, Michigan, but injuries limited him to averaging 4.5 assists and 1.3 assists in just six games.

Milton, who spent the last five seasons with Philadelphia, has not played at all in 13 of the last 27 games. Brown, a sixth-year forward, will join his fifth NBA team.

Celtics acquire Tillman from Grizzlies for Stevens, pair of second-round picks

BOSTON (AP)—The NBA-leading Boston Celtics added some depth at center on Wednesday, acquiring big man Xavier Tillman from the Grizzlies in exchange for forward Lamar Stevens and two future second-round draft picks.

With the deal Boston adds some depth in the frontcourt behind 7-footer Kristaps Porzingis, who has struggled with durability, and 37-year-old veteran Al Horford.

The 6-foot-8 Tillman has appeared in 34 games for Memphis this season, averaging six points, 4.6 rebounds and a career-best 1.7 assists while shooting 40.8% from the field. The fourth-year player is also averaging a career-high one block and 1.2 steals per game, making him one of only 14 players in the NBA averaging a block and steal per game.

Stevens logged 19 games for Boston this season and averaged 2.8 points and 1.6 rebounds in 6.4 minutes per game.

The Celtics entered Wednesday with a 38-12 record.

Chiefs are Super Bowl underdogs against 49ers

» Turns out they kind of like it

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes participates in the NFL football Super Bowl 58 opening night Monday, Feb. 5, 2024, in Las Vegas. The San Francisco 49ers will play the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl 58 Sunday.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—For most of the past six years, Patrick Mahomes has had to manufacture the chip that he carries on his shoulder, because the Kansas City Chiefs have been so good for so long that they were almost always expected to win.

That is no longer the case.

During a season in which the Chiefs scuffled along on offense, and at one point lost five of eight games, they went from being the favorite on a weekly basis to something entirely different: an underdog. They became the team that received the points when betting lines came out, rather than giving them up, and that chip on Mahomes' shoulder suddenly appeared on its own.

"It kind of lit a fire under some guys," Mahomes admitted, "including myself."

Perish the thought of giving the two-time league and Super Bowl MVP another reason to feel he needs to prove himself.

Yet that is exactly what Mahomes has done in the playoffs, where he's played the best he has all season. He threw for 262 yards and a touchdown in a frigid wild-card win over Miami, doubled down with 215 yards passing and two scores in a divisional win in Buffalo, and had 241 yards passing and a TD in Baltimore—all without throwing an interception.

In the past two of those games, the Chiefs were underdogs at kickoff, just as they likely will be when they play the 49ers in the Super Bowl on Sunday in the gambling mecca of Las Vegas. San Francisco has been a consistent 1.5-point favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, though that number could change by game time.

Only five teams since 2000 have won the Super Bowl while being underdogs in each of their final three games.

"Listen, we understand the reasoning behind it. I mean, we get it, and understandably so," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We may not be the prettiest bunch, but we're going to battle, and that's kind of been the personality of this team.

"I don't think it bothers us," Reid added. "We understand, so it is what it is."

In fact, the Chiefs seem to relish the underdog role.

Mahomes certainly does. He is 9-3 as an underdog, giving him the best winning percentage of any quarterback with a minimum of 10 starts—playoffs included—over the past 15 seasons. The Ravens' Lamar Jackson, whom Mahomes vanquished in the AFC title game a little more than a week ago, is next on the list at 9-5 as an underdog.

In fact, the bigger the underdog, the more successful the Chiefs have been in recent years. In five games that they have been at least a 3.5-piont underdog since Mahomes took over as the starting QB, they won four times outright. In the lone loss, in a game against the Patriots in October 2018, they were 4-point underdogs and lost by a field goal, covering the spread.

One player who doesn't subscribe to the notion that the Chiefs are underdogs is 49ers tight end George Kittle.

He was on the losing sideline in the Super Bowl four years ago, when the Chiefs rallied with three fourth-quarter touchdowns to win their first Lombardi Trophy in 50 years. The rest of the time, Kittle has watched from afar as Kansas City went to six straight AFC title games, won four of them, and hoisted another Lombardi Trophy when they beat the Eagles last year.

"They should have all the attention," Kittle said. "I think they're very used to it. I don't think it's a distraction for them. But while we might be under the radar, I guess, to people on the outside, I think the Chiefs are very aware that we're not."

No, one thing the Chiefs rarely do is overlook an opponent. And it seems downright absurd that they would start at the Super Bowl, particularly against the 49ers, who have been favored in each of the 20 games they have played this season.

The only other NFL team favored that many times? The Chiefs in 2021, when they lost in the AFC title game.

"At the end of the day, it's playoff games. You want to win. This is what you play for," Mahomes said, "and I think that fire—regardless of if we were an underdog or not—would have been lit, because this is the time of year that you work for, and you put in those hard practices for. I think we have that mindset that if we're going to practice the way we do, and we work the way we work, we're not going to let it slide. We're going to maximize our opportunity every time we're out there."

Now a father of two, Mahomes has new perspective on football and life

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP)—Patrick Mahomes is a much different quarterback than he was four years ago, when he helped the Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl to end a championship drought stretching back five decades.

He's a different man, for that matter, a father of two these days with different priorities in life.

Sometimes the two intersect, one job making him better at the other.

"I think you learn a ton being a father, man. You learn how to be patient," said Mahomes, who will lead the AFC champion Chiefs into a Super Bowl rematch against the NFC champion 49ers on Sunday. "You learn how to try to really boost people's confidence, especially your kids. Through seasons like I've had this last year, it's never losing hope, never going too negative in adverse times. Just continue to boost people's confidence, continue to strive for hard work and really be patient."

Mahomes' patience certainly has been put to the test this season.

He watched his wide receivers drop more passes than any team in the NFL, and the rest of the Kansas City offense commit more penalties than any team but one. He had to choke back his angst—sometimes successfully, other times not so much—when a missed call by the officials may have cost the Chiefs a game. And he had to finally accept the fact that defenses simply were not going to let him chuck the ball all over the field anymore, and that his sandlot-style of play had to change.

In some ways, Mahomes had to reinvent himself, becoming what he once seemed to loath: a game manager.

Unlike that championship run four years ago, or the two Super Bowls since that earned Mahomes a second ring, the Chiefs this season did not rely entirely on their offense to carry them. They had the No. 2 scoring defense in the NFL, which had to bail out Mahomes' side of the ball when it was struggling so mightily midway through the season.

So while he can still make the audacious no-look throw, or throw that wizardly rocket through double coverage, he also learned to check down to running backs when deep shots were covered. He accepted that audibles to running plays when defenses stacked the line of scrimmage were OK. Mahomes even learned that he could take a sack when it was most beneficial to keep the clock running, which he did in the AFC championship game in Baltimore.

"I think guys understood," Mahomes said upon reflection, "that we could play a different way to win football games."

Sounds like a quarterback that has learned a few things in six years as a starter.

"He's the catalyst. He's the reason why we're here and why we're able to keep coming back to back," said tight end Travis Kelce, perhaps Mahomes' closest friend on the team. "And honestly, he just gives his team a certain sense of urgency and confidence that we can go and get it done, and that goes a long way."

Mahomes has always been mature beyond his years, even if he didn't always possess the patience that comes with experience. He almost had to be, because growing up, Mahomes was so much better than other kids his own age that he would usually have to play against older ones, whether that was in football, basketball or his first love, baseball.

The son of longtime big league pitcher Pat Mahomes recalled that one time, during a T-ball game, a grounder was hit toward him at shortstop. Most kids at that level would throw a looping rainbow to first base, but he sent a laser across the diamond.

"It hit the kid right in the face and broke his glasses," Mahomes said with a smile, "and so they told me after that they wanted me to roll the ball to first base, and I ended up just playing first base and catching it from then on."

Good thing for the Chiefs he didn't fall in love with catching balls.

Then again, maybe he would have been a heck of a wide receiver.

"I mean, I always just loved sports from the beginning," Mahomes said, "all sports. I loved watching. I love playing. I mean, I remember my mom used to get mad at me, because I would throw — like, you know, kids throw the ball off the wall? I'd throw it off the TV, because I was watching TV at the same time, and she used to get real mad that I was doing that."

The dad in Mahomes—his daughter, Sterling, is 2, while his son, Bronze, turned 1 in November—might better understand where Mama Mahomes was coming from back in those days.

While much has changed for Mahomes over the past few years, much has remained the same. He's still one of the best QBs to play the game. Still putting up big numbers every time he steps on the field. And still a fierce competitor, as evidenced by a game against Buffalo, when he roared up and down the sideline after an offsides call cost Kansas City a go-ahead touchdown.

"We don't take him for granted," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "We know we're seeing something special."

Reid points out that Mahomes is still "young in this business," just 28 years old. And for all his success, Mahomes has only been a starting quarterback for a short while, and he could have more than a decade of playing still ahead of him.

"It's humbling," Mahomes said, "because I never thought I would be in this many Super Bowl games, honestly. I mean, you strive to be great, but you understand how hard it is to even be in this game. And for us to be in my fourth one, it truly is remarkable, and I don't take it for granted, because you never know if you're going to be able to be back in this game."

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

TMS, HMS debut strong in girls softball

Tanapag Middle School Tatagas and Hopwood Middle School Hilitais and girls softball teams won their games in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday and Monday at the Dandan Softball Field.

The Tatagas, in the first game of the season, defeated Chacha Ocean View Middle School, 41-11; while the Hilitais bombarded the collective private school team made up of players from Saipan Community School, Grace Christian Academy, and Saipan International School, 35-1, last Saturday, and scooped up their second win after they beat Dandan Middle School, 6-0.

LEIGH GASES

Tanapag Middle School's girls softball team poses for a photo during the season opener of the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday.

TMS ended the game early as they scored their 41 runs within two innings, while COVMS could only put up 11 on the board. TMS had 16 hits—four of which came from Chelsea Santos, and three from Callie Abraham.

COVMS, for their part, scored via RBI walks, with runs scored from the top and end of their lineup.

With Abraham and Santos in the TMS team are Aaliyah Cosmes, Amaya Ogumoro, Bethany Delos Santos, Ivalynn Farnsworth, Jonielle Pua, Kaya Macaranas, Kayshlie Aguon, Kyria Ngiraked, Marlaina Benjamin, Neavena Iguel, Precilla Quitugua, Risa Sablan, Ziella Sablan, and Rexyann Jose.

It was RBI walks galore for the HMS and SCS-GCA-SIS game as the pitchers could not find the strike zone. All runs scored for HMS was from RBI walks, while the lone run for SCS-GCA-SIS was from a fielding error which allowed Emma Sablan to score.

As for last Monday's game, the Hilitais silenced DMS, 6-0, via runs made by Lailey Teregeyo, Paulette Somol, Siancy Phylim, Alina Esakova, Kaeley Schardt, and Gretchen Tebit.

The HMS team with Teregeyo, Somol, Phylim, Esakova, Schardt, and Tebit also includes Jayla Ayuyu, Aubyguel Castro, Mika Daikichy, Elinie Delos Santos, Luwaisór Fitial, Tehani Jolo, Margret Kaipat, Mikalynn Olaitiman, Jeanelle Tibong, and Manyah Villagomez.

In other results, Mount Carmel School bested Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, 19-5 last Saturday; and last Monday, COVMS edged DMS, 12-5, and FMS routed SCS-GCA-SIS, 17-8.

FHB signs on as a gold sponsor for NMC's Golf Open

As part of its long-standing commitment to higher education in the CNMI, First Hawaiian Bank recently donated $5,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation for its upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024.

"At First Hawaiian Bank, we believe investing in our future means investing in our students. By supporting NMC's Golf Open, we're teeing off on a brighter future for the CNMI, opening doors to educational opportunities that strengthen our communities and propel our next generation forward," said First Hawaiian Bank vice president and CNMI area manager Vickie Izuka.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event at the LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is $250.

"FHB's commitment to education through the NMC Golf Open is a powerful example of community partnership," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram (nmc.proa) or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

NMC

First Hawaiian Bank recently donated $5,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation in support of its upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024 at the LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort. In the photo is Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero with First Hawaiian Bank vice president and area manager Vickie Izuka and FHB and NMC representatives.

ISAIAH

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ics Championships.

"I hope I can get FINA B time. This is a very important trip for me and I'm very grateful for my coach, Ms. Yuko [Kimura], my mom, and as well as God," he said.

Batallones, for her part, said the Doha meet is another great opportunity for her to advance her career in swimming.

"I'm looking forward to great results like personal bests or even better, to update records. I'm really excited to compete because we've been training really hard. I also feel a little bit nervous, but I know that our coach and Ms. Yuko trained and prepared us well," she said.

BDE

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third, but picked themselves up again with two runs. Boleras had yet to score, but Maria Quitugua finally put them on the board when she scored in the fourth inning for a 3-1 BDE lead.

The floodgates then opened for BDE as they attacked Boleras pitcher C.J. Lizama with multiple runs in the fifth inning. Seven runs scored to put them up, 10-1. Boleras still had a chance to catch up, but they failed to score in the fifth and came up with only two in the sixth.

BDE scored two more runs in the sixth to make it 12-3, which became the final score as the Boleras failed to produce in their last at-bat. Lynnae Cabrera, Allana Sumang, and Iggy Teliu scored two runs each for BDE.

Earlier, the 670 Magas Babes owned the Lady Blue Jays, 12-3.

The Lady Blue Jays scored their three runs in the fifth inning, while they failed to connect for the rest of the game. Carey Demapan, Kianu Aldan, and Alannah Sablan scored their three runs.

Meanwhile, the Babes scored two in the second, then seven in the second inning. They added two more in the fifth and one in the sixth. Catalina Dela Cruz and Erlina Naputi collected three hits and runs each for the Babes.

In the game between Lady Sufa and Bat & Boujee, Lady Sufa won, 10-7.

Lady Sufa had a big lead after a five run first inning, while Bat & Boujee scored just one run. They went on to tack on five more runs before Bat & Boujee could add more.

Bat & Boujee then went scoreless for the next three innings until they tried to rally in the fifth inning with six big runs. However, they came up short by three runs as they fell in order in the last inning.

BLUE

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first and second inning was a nightmare that the Spartans couldn't wait to wake from, as the Reds scored nine in the first, then eight in the second for a 17-5 lead.

However, the Spartans scored four in the third and six in the fourth, while the Reds added just three, for a 20-15 Reds lead. The Reds tried to score more insurance runs but mustered up only two runs in the fifth and no runs in the sixth, which gave Spartans hope of redemption.

The Reds then brought in five runs in the last inning and their 27-15 lead held up even as the Spartans hacked away and came up short by two runs when they scored eight for a 27-25 final.

LEIGH GASES

Reds pitcher Joab throws a pitch during their game against the Spartans in the last regular game of the season last Tuesday in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Cavs run NBA-best win streak to seven by beating Wizards.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

TMS, HMS debut strong in girls softball.

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Isaiah, Maria off to Doha today

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

National swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko and Maria Batallones will fly off to Doha, Qatar today as the CNMI's representatives to the 2024 World Aquatics Championships.

Joining the 17-year-old Aleksenko and 15-year-old Batallones in Qatar's capital from Feb. 11 to 18 are head coach Hiroyuki Kimura and Northern Marianas Swimming Federation representative Richard Sikkel.

Aleksenko and Batallones, both from Marianas High School, topped the selection process for the two slots available for the 2024 World Aquatics Championships. All CNMI swimmers that participated in the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara were eligible and Aleksenko and Batallones earned the most FINA points (average of Top 3 events) with 700 points and 531 points, respectively.

For the record, Kean Pajarillaga was second among the men with 567 points followed by Kouki Watanabe and Taiyo Akimaru with 517 points and 506 points, respectively.

For the women, after Batallones was the 466 points of Shoko Litulumar and the 425 points of Piper Raho.

While the CNMI can send more than two swimmers in the 25m short course meet, the prohibitive cost of sending additional swimmers ($3,000 per swimmer) led NMSF to just send two. World Aquatics bankrolled Team NMI's trip to Qatar.

Aleksenko will swim the 200m butterfly and 200m individual medley, while Batallones will concentrate in the 100m and 200m breaststroke in Doha.

Kimura said Aleksenko's goal is to update the CNMI 200m butterfly record of 2:02.96 he established in Melbourne in December 2022.

"However, we have a more high-level target in the 200m butterfly. It is the qualifying time for the Junior Olympics in Japan and it's 1:59.39."

In the 200m IM, Kimura wants his ward to reset Rezne Wong's CNMI national record of 2:05.84.

Batallones' mission, meanwhile, is to break her own 100m breaststroke of 1:18.03, also set in Melbourne; and in the 200m breaststroke, to reset the Myana Welch's record of 2:53.35.

"Our target is to make four national records in Doha!" said Kimura.

Aleksenko said he's very excited to represent the CNMI anew in the 2024 World Aquat-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

National swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko, right, and Maria Batallones pose in the pool following a training session in the lead up to the 2024 World Aquatics Championships in Doha, Qatar.

Blue Jays strike first in Masters League playoffs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Blue Jays struck first in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League playoffs that started last Wednesday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

In what seemed to be one fell swoop, they won over the Marlins, 25-18. The Blue Jays' bats exploded and beat the Marlins' pitching staff black and blue in the second inning when they scored 21 of their 25 runs.

Marlins pitching was on life support as they could not get out of the second inning with multiple back-to-back hits and runs scored by the high flying Blue Jays. The Blue Jays restarted their lineup a few times before the third out was mercifully made, but at the end of it, the damage was done.

LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, a Blue Jays baserunner is being held close by a Reds first baseman during one of their games in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League played at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Alvin Takai first hit a triple, then went the extra 90 feet to home when he scored on an inside-the-park homer in his next at-bat. RBI singles were hit left and right, with addition of walks, errors, and doubles by Paul Salalila, Jess Takano, and Andave Camacho.

The Blue Jays' 21-run inning basically erased the Marlins' efforts when they scored 10 runs by the second inning as they were still down by 11. The Marlins then added five more in the third, but the Blue Jays' lead was just ever-growing as they scored three more runs for a 24-15 game.

Both teams went silent after one run scored for the Marlins in the next inning, but the Blue Jays' lead was more than enough to take the victory.

In the last regular season game last Tuesday, the Reds took down last place Spartans, 27-25.

It seemed like the Reds would have an easy time, but the Spartans fought back toward the end of the game. The

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BDE only undefeated team in BASA

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team BDE is bringing that explosive energy in the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association women's division as they are the only undefeated team left.

They collected their fourth win in as many games against the Boleras, 12-3, last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.

Despite a 1-2-3 first inning, BDE kept their calm and scored a run in the second. They went down in order again in the

See BDE on Page 27

LEIGH GASES

BDE's lead batter Lynnae Cabrera swings at a pitch in their game against Boleras in the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association women's division last Sunday at the Dandan Softball Field.